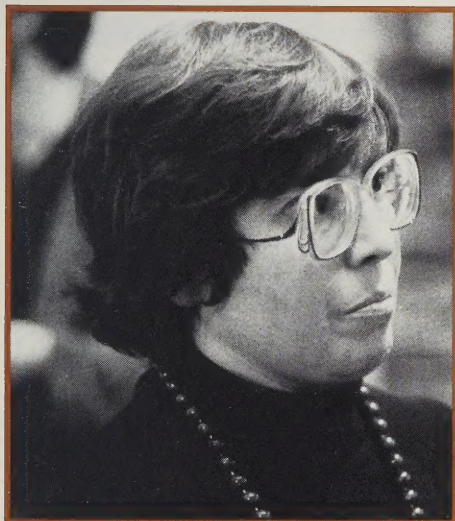
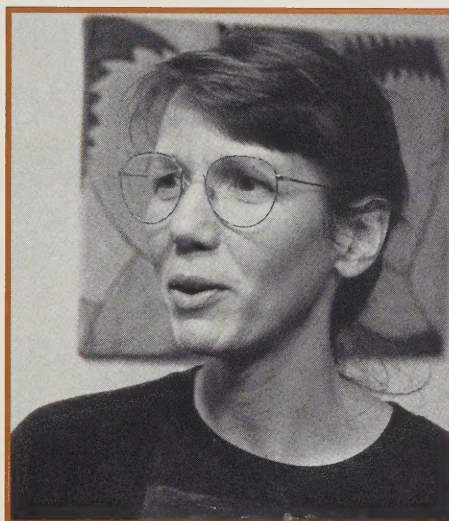


FESTIVAL

Quarterly



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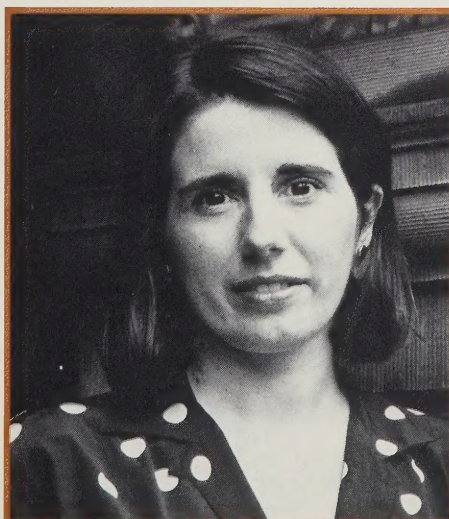
Erma Martin Yost

A Remarkable Group Show: *"Six Mennonite Women Artists"*

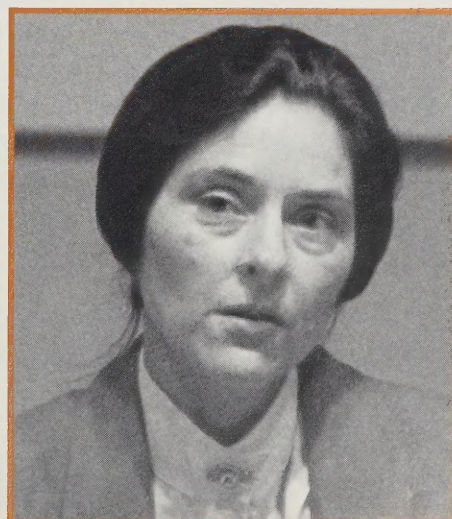
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Ann Graber Miller



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POWER TOOLS

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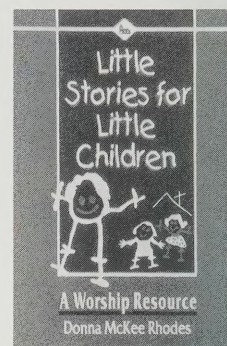
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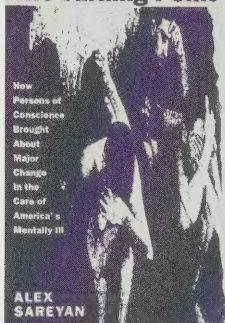
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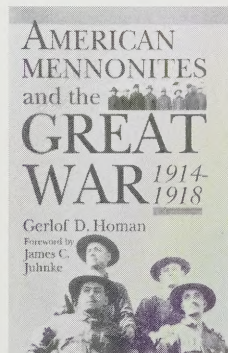
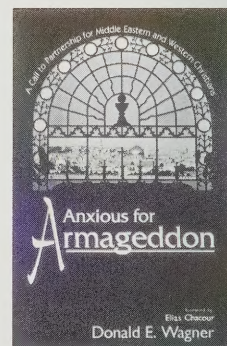
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—John A. Lapp, Executive Secretary, Mennonite Central Committee

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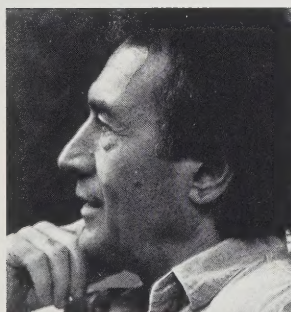
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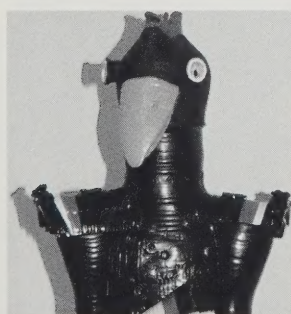
Six Mennonite women, holding in common their work as artists and their connections to the same faith community, currently have their art hanging side-by-side in The People's Place Gallery. Visitors to the show will have to discover any common themes or techniques!



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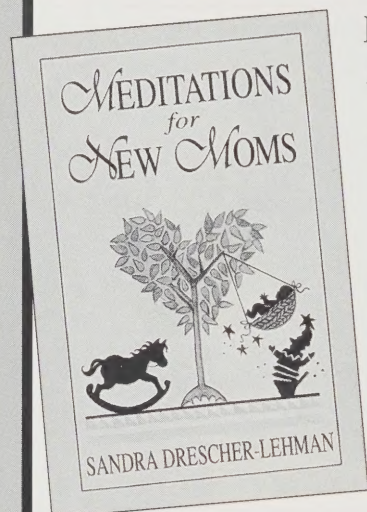
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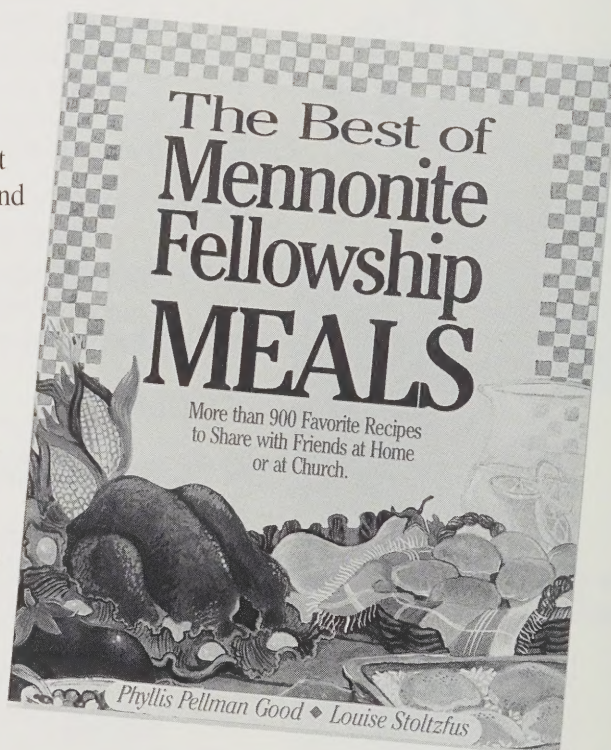
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Quarterly

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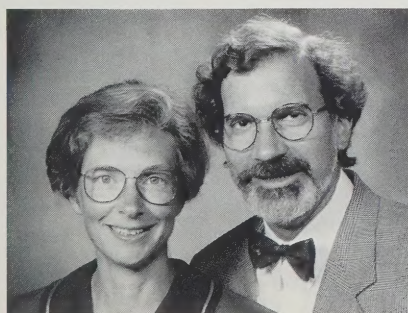
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Phyllis Pellman Good, Merle Good

Why Do Mennonites Warm Up to Mother Teresa?

The people in my life who knew that the Mennonite World Conference Executive Committee gathered in Calcutta during January showed a lot of interest in our discussions and my impressions of the city. But when I mentioned that we met with Mother Teresa one afternoon, all else paled.

Grandmothers squealed, teenagers came around to verify the news, my friends pursued with questions about what she really was like, one co-worker asked to simply touch my copy of the yellow "business" card the feisty little nun had handed each of us. (Okay, so we Committee members were a little giddy, too, when the MCC India staffperson asked if we'd like to visit with her.) What's going on among us sturdy, unflappable, orderly types?

After I got over my horror that this is some sort of celebrity worship on the part of character-conscious, integrity-minded Mennonites, I began to believe there might be something healthier at play here: Mennonites actually identify with Mother Teresa. Well, sort of.

Look at her. She's plain. She lives simply (the owning-only-two-saris practice outdoes even the roughest Mennonite discipline statement). She gets her hands dirty.

She also has a place in our fantasies. She makes us wonder, subconsciously, if we could have held onto the powerful strength of our identifiable faith communities and still made some dent in the world's conscience—and its needs?

Could we have unapologetically kept our different look, thus continually reminding the rest of the world and ourselves who we really are?

Might we have been able to have a vital devotional life, rooted in the rituals of our church, and a frontline public life, all at the same time?

Mother Teresa seems to have managed it all. Set aside, for a moment, her current celebrity status. Before people tried to kiss her feet (literally), she risked being underestimated for her backward clothing, for her insistence on operating from within the

church, for her refusal to give up the regimen of daily prayer times.

Now that she's an international hero, she gets the benefit of the doubt on many fronts, but she still isn't immune from criticism. Cynical and sophisticated *Vanity Fair* magazine recently found her politically incorrect because of the company she keeps and her pushy personal style. Nuns aren't supposed to demand what they want or shake hands with compromised politicians. So the standard is high for anyone who professes religious faith, especially for one who is so visibly identified with it.

Our history and collective memory told us that all along. But what we have been lacking more recently is a fresh example of how to hold together our faith-life when we carry tormenting uncertainty about the way we tried to live our faith in the past. Come to us from another world, Mother Teresa tempts our imagination, gives us a new way to think.

She finds a way to have her faith and life be one, while working in one of the world's most confounding crucibles. She marches into high places and gets what she wants, in spite of, or because of, her identification with the church. She prays as routinely and as regularly as she eats and sleeps, as relentlessly as she works. Without that, she claims, her work would be impossible. "All those who come to join with us for a time never return the same," she told us in her insistent way. "It is the prayer and the work together." The schedule posted on the wall confirmed the rhythmic practice of prayer and work these people keep.

What if a wizened old nun, in addition to rescuing kids and the dying from the sidewalks of Calcutta, gave modern Mennonites clues about how to fit some seemingly disparate pieces of their lives together? —PPG

I like FQ's brief, regular columns—the ones by Krabills, Jewel Showalter, David Augsburg. I know it wouldn't be FQ without the features, but the columnists begin to feel like old friends.

I would miss the Film Ratings. I don't go to the movies much, but if I want to know whether a film is worth seeing I head for the FQ. I have found your ratings to be "de confranca"—appropriate and believable, I guess you'd say.

E. Elaine Kauffman
Campinas, Brazil

As a Somali Mennonite I do not know much of what is going on in the Mennonite world.

This magazine is good help for me in knowing Mennonite history and following the events that are taking place in Mennonite churches around the world.

Abdi Abdillahi Duale
Nairobi, Kenya

It's my day to be with my 94-year-old dad, and I found the Summer 1993 *Festival Quarterly* with your editorial, "Will We Feel Betrayed If They Are Happy?" So much well said! Am I wrong to suppose you left a lot unsaid on the subject?

Anyway, who doesn't have pain, grief, disappointment, and injury because of another's sin? But to perpetuate one's anger and keep alive the memory of even such a terrible injustice as sexual abuse seems counter-productive, even from a self-ish standpoint. It seems even less appropriate for a Christian.

Thank you for speaking. Maybe some will be helped to greater wholeness through it. It is also good to hear a voice speak for many of us—who, when aware of our own need for God's mercy and grace sometimes cringe at what sounds unseemly, though supposedly "for women."

Dorcas D. Miller
Greenwood, Delaware

The article in your Spring/Summer 1994 issue (p.60) by Peter J. Dyck reminded me of a similar event in Vienna, Austria. Karlsschule, a school built by the Evangelical Church in Austria in 1961-62, was converted by Nazi SS troops into a munitions depot. The building was burned to destroy its contents when the Nazi troops evacuated in 1944. I believe some of the munitions had been removed by Austrian citizens before the fire.

Brethren and Mennonite workers, in cooperation with the Evangelical Church began a rebuilding project there in 1954 and 1955, respectively. Some of the workers were Mennonite PAX men and had been in Civilian Public Service. The work was not completed until 1961, partly because this was work on an historically significant building, which made this a restoration project rather than a simple rebuilding project.

Did some of those who worked at Espelkamp, Backnang, Wedel, etc. also work at Karlsschule? M. E. Gerber, in his little typescript booklet, "Karlsschule," lists names of those who worked on this reconstruction. Have histories of the other projects been written?

Martin Spangler
Elizabethtown,
Pennsylvania

The editors welcome letters. Letters for publication must include the writer's name and address and should be sent to Festival Quarterly, 3513 Old Philadelphia Pike, Intercourse, PA 17534. The editors regret that at times the volume of mail necessitates publishing only a representative cross-section. Letters are subject to editing for reasons of space or clarity.

Drawing by Dana Fradon; © 1993, The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

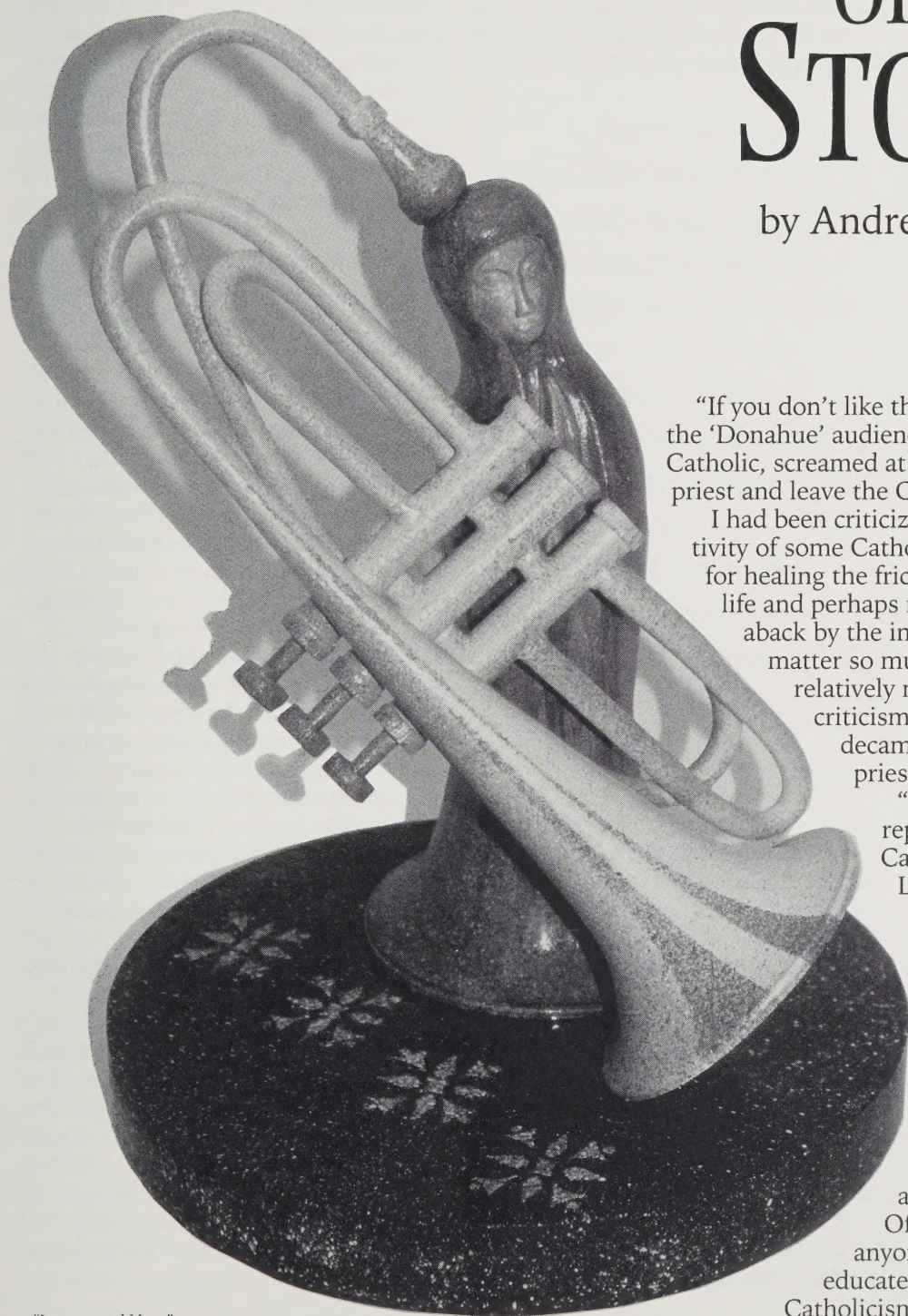


"Having completed the formation of the earth, on the seventh day the Lord rested. Then, on the eighth day, the Lord said, 'Let there be problems.' And there were problems."

Why Do Catholics Stay in the Church?

BECAUSE OF THE STORIES

by Andrew M. Greeley



"Instrumental Mary,"
ceramic sculpture by Herb Weaver

"If you don't like the Catholic Church," the woman in the 'Donahue' audience, by her own admission not Catholic, screamed at me, "why don't you stop being a priest and leave the Church?"

I had been criticizing what I took to be the insensitivity of some Catholic leaders to the importance of sex for healing the frictions and the wounds of the married life and perhaps renewing married love. I was taken aback by the intensity of her anger. Why did it matter so much to her that I had offered some relatively mild criticism? Why did such criticism seem to her to demand that I decamp from Catholicism and the priesthood?

"Why should I leave?" was the only reply I could manage. "I like being Catholic and I like being a priest."

Later I remembered the response to a similar question by my friend Hans Küng: "Why leave? Luther tried that and it didn't work!"

Yet the question persists. In its most naked form it demands to know, "How can someone who is intelligent and well educated continue to be a Roman Catholic in these times?" The question is not a new one. It has been asked by anti-Catholic nativists for 150 years.

Often the latent subtext is, "How can anyone who is intelligent and well educated believe in any religion, especially Catholicism?"

The question is worth a response, if only to

clarify what religion is and what there is about the Catholic religion that explains its enormous appeal even to men and women who think that the Pope is out of touch and that the bishops and the priests are fools.

Catholics remain Catholics because of the Catholic religious sensibility, a congeries of metaphors that explain what human life means, with deep and powerful appeal to the total person. The argument is not whether Catholics should leave their traditions or whether they stay for the right reasons. The argument is that they do in fact stay because of the attractiveness of Catholic metaphors.

You can make a persuasive case against Catholicism if you want. The Church is resolutely authoritarian and often seems to be proud of the fact that it "is not a democracy." It discriminates against women and homosexuals. It tries to regulate the bedroom behavior of married men and women. It tries to impose the Catholic position regarding abortion on everyone. It represses dissent and even disagreement. The Vatican seems obsessed with sex. The Pope preaches against birth control in countries with rapidly expanding populations. Catholics often cringe when the local bishop or cardinal pontificates on social policy issues. Bishops and priests are authoritarian and insensitive. Lay people have no control of how their contributions are spent. Priests are unhappy, and many of them leave the priesthood as soon as they can to marry. The Church has covered up sexual abuse by priests for decades. Now it is paying millions of dollars to do penance for the sexual amusements of supposedly celibate priests while it seeks to minimize, if not eliminate altogether, the sexual pleasures of married lay people.

One might contend with such arguments. Research indicates that priests are among the happiest men in America. The Church was

organized in a democratic structure for the first thousand years and could be so organized again. But let the charges stand for the sake of the argument. They represent the way many of those who are not Catholic see the Catholic Church, and with some nuances and qualifications the way many of those inside the church see the Catholic institution. Nonetheless this case against Catholicism simply does not compute for most Catholics when

The Catholic
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It was 15 percent
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and it is 15 percent today.

How can this be,
the outsider
wonders.

they decide whether to leave or stay.

Do they in fact remain? Are not Catholics leaving the church in droves? Prof. Michael Hout of the Survey Research Center at the University of California at Berkeley has demonstrated that the Catholic defection rate remained constant over 30 years. It was 15 percent in 1960 and it is 15 percent today. Half of those who leave the Church do so when they marry a non-Catholic with stronger religious commitment. The other half leave for reasons of anger, authority, and sex—the reasons cited above.

How can this be, the outsider wonders. For one thing, as the general population has increased,

the number of Catholics has increased proportionately. Still, how can 85 percent of those who are born Catholic remain, one way or another, in the church? Has Catholicism so brainwashed them that they are unable to leave?

The answer is that Catholics like being Catholic. For the last 30 years the hierarchy and the clergy have done just about everything they could to drive the laity out of the church and have not succeeded. It seems unlikely that they will ever drive the stubborn lay folk out of the Church because the lay folk like being Catholic.

But why do they like being Catholic?

First, it must be noted that Americans show remarkable loyalty to their religious heritages. As difficult as it is for members of the academic and media elites to comprehend the fact, religion is important to most Americans. There is no sign that this importance has declined in the last half century (as measured by survey data from the 1940s). Skepticism, agnosticism, atheism are not increasing in America, as disturbing as this truth might be to the denizens of midtown Manhattan.

Moreover, while institutional authority, doctrinal propositions, and ethical norms are components of a religious heritage—and important components—they do not exhaust the heritage. Religion is experience, image, and story before it is anything else. Catholics like their heritage because it has great stories.

If one considers that for much of Christian history the population was illiterate and the clergy semiliterate and that authority was far away, one begins to understand that the heritage for most people most of the time was almost entirely story, ritual, ceremony, and eventually art. So it has been for most of human history. So it is, I suggest (and my data backs me up), even today.

Roger C. Schank, a professor of psychology at Northwestern University who specializes in the study of artificial intelligence, argues in his book *Tell Me a Story* that stories are the way humans explain reality to themselves. The more and better our stories, Schank says, the better our intelligence.

Catholicism has great stories because at the center of its heritage is “sacramentalism,” the conviction that God discloses Himself in the objects and events and persons of ordinary life. Hence Catholicism is willing to risk stories about angels and saints and souls in purgatory and Mary the Mother of Jesus and stained-glass windows and statues and stations of the cross and rosaries and medals and the whole panoply of images and devotions that were so offensive to the austere leaders of the Reformation. Moreover, the Catholic heritage also has the elaborate ceremonial rituals that mark the passing of the year—Midnight Mass, the Easter Vigil, First Communion, May Crowning, Lent, Advent, grammar-school graduation, and the festivals of the saints.

Catholicism has also embraced the whole of the human life cycle in Sacraments (with a capital S), which provide rich ceremonial settings, even when indifferently administered for the critical landmarks of life. The Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession that was) and the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick (extreme unction that was) embed in ritual and mystery the deeply held Catholic story of second chances.

The “sacramentalism” of the Catholic heritage has also led it to absorb as much as it thinks it can from what it finds to be good, true, and beautiful in pagan religions: Brigid is converted from the pagan goddess to the Christian patron of spring, poetry and a new life in Ireland; Guadeloupe is first a pagan and then a Christian shrine in Spain and then our Lady of Guadalupe

becomes the patron of poor Mexicans. This “baptism” of pagan metaphors (sometimes done more wisely than at other times) adds yet another overlay of stories to the Catholic heritage.

The sometimes inaccurate dictum “once a Catholic, always a Catholic,” is based on the fact that the religious images of Catholicism are acquired early in life and are tenacious. You may break with the institution, you may reject the

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propositions, but you cannot escape the images.

The Eucharist (as purists insist we must now call the Mass) is a particularly powerful and appealing Catholic ritual, even when it is done badly (as it often is) and especially when it is done well (which it sometimes is). In the Mass we join a community meal of celebration with our neighbors, our family, our friends, those we love. Such an awareness may not be explicitly on the minds of Catholics when they go to Church on Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning, but is the nature of metaphor that those who are influenced by it need not be consciously aware of the influence.

In a *New York Times*—CBS News Poll last April, 69 percent of Catholics responding said they attend Mass for reasons of meaning rather than obligation.

Another important Catholic story is that of the neighborhood parish. Because of the tradition of village parishes with which Catholics came to America, the dense concentration of Catholics in many cities and the small geographical size of the parish, parishes can and often do become intense communities for many Catholics. They actuate what a University of Chicago sociologist, James S. Coleman, calls “social capital,” the extra resources of energy, commitment, and intelligence that overlapping structures produce. This social capital, this story of a sacred place in the heart of urban America, becomes even stronger when the parish contains that brilliant American Catholic innovation—the parochial school.

Perhaps the Catholic religious sensibility all begins with the Christmas crib. A mother shows her child (perhaps age 3) the crib scene. The child loves it (of course) because it has everything she likes—a mommy, a daddy, a baby, animals, shepherds, shepherd children, angels, and men in funny clothes—and with token integration! Who is the baby? the little girl asks. That’s Jesus. Who’s Jesus? The mother hesitates, not sure of exactly how you explain the communication of idioms to a 3-year-old. Jesus is God. That doesn’t bother the little girl at all. Everyone was a baby once. Why not God? Who’s the lady holding Jesus? That’s Mary. Oh! Who’s Mary? The mother throws theological caution to the winds. She’s God’s mommy. Again the kid has no problem. Everyone has a mommy, why not God?

It’s a hard story to beat. Later in life the little girl may come to understand that God loves us so much that He takes on human form to be able to walk with us even into

the valley of death and that God also loves us the way a mother loves a newborn babe—which is the function of the Mary metaphor in the Catholic tradition.

It may seem that I am reducing religion to childishness—to stories and images and rituals and communities. In fact, it is in the poetic, the metaphoric, the experiential dimension of the personality that religion finds both its origins and raw power. Because we are reflective creatures we must also reflect on our religious experiences and stories; it is in the (lifelong) interlude of reflection that propositional religion and religious authority become important, indeed indispensable. But then the religiously mature person returns to the imagery, having criticized it, analyzed it, questioned it, to commit the self once more in sophisticated and reflective maturity to the story.

The Catholic imagination sees God and Her grace lurking everywhere and hence enjoys a more gracious and benign repertory of religious symbols than do most other religions. On measures of religious imagery I have developed for national surveys (and call the GRACE scale), Catholics consistently have more “gracious” images of God: they are more likely than others to picture God as a Mother, a Lover, a Spouse, and a Friend (as opposed to a Father, a Judge, a Master, and a King). The story of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus is the most “graceful” story of

all—the story of a God who in some fashion took on human form so that he could show us how to live and how to die, a God who went down into the valley of death with us and promised that death would not be the end.

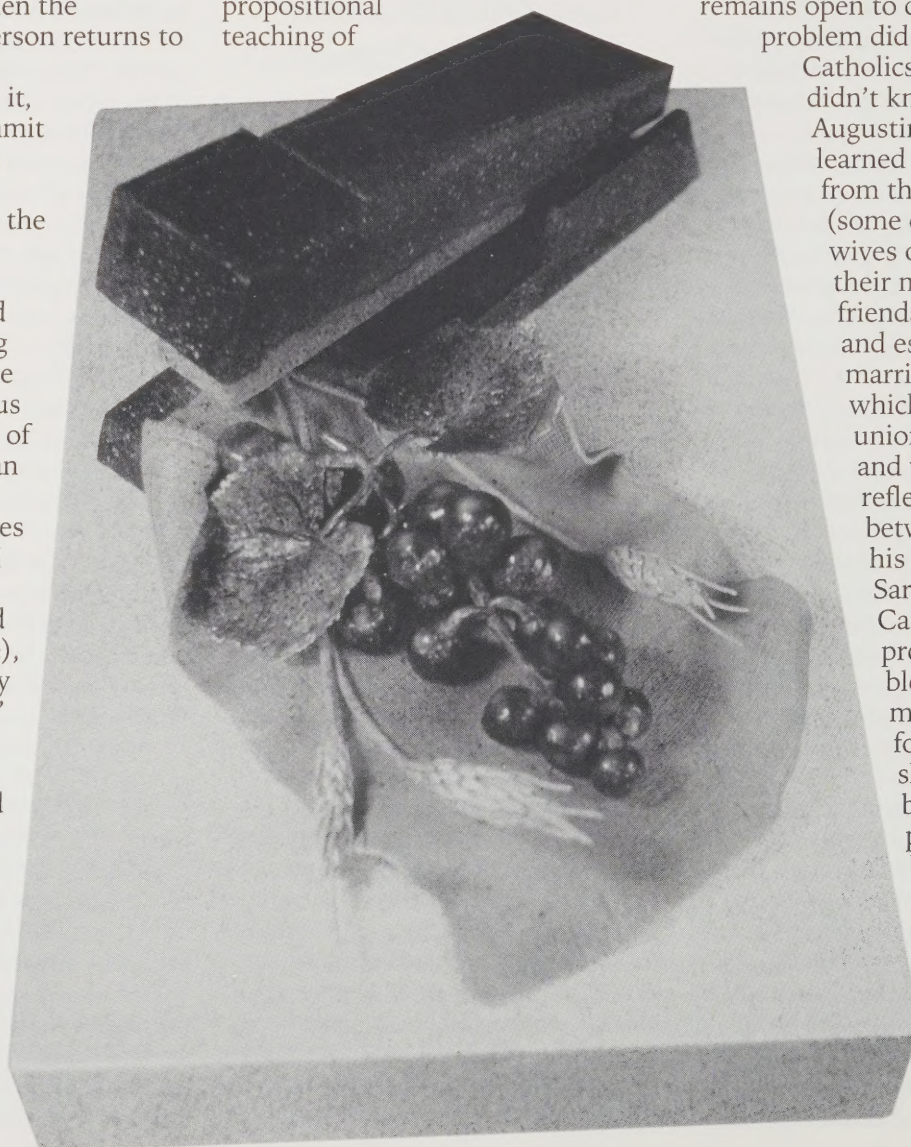
How do they reconcile such gracious imagery with the often apparently stern and punitive postures of their religious leadership? It must be understood that religious heritages contain many different strains and components, not all of them always in complete harmony with one another. However, in any apparent conflict between images of a gracious God and severe propositional teaching of

the leaders of a heritage, the latter will surely lose.

Consider the matter of sexuality, a subject on which Catholicism is thought to be particularly repressive. Under the grim and dominant influence of St. Augustine, the Catholic high tradition has always been suspicious of “too much” marital sex. It was all right for married people to make love for the purposes of having children, so long as they didn’t enjoy it too much.

Whether this cold and harsh teaching was ever accepted by married lay people, whether in fact it was ever possible for anyone but a celibate theologian to believe it, remains open to question. But the problem did not bother most

Catholics because they didn’t know about St. Augustine, and they learned about marital sex from their parish priests (some of whom had wives of their own), their mothers, their friends and neighbors, and especially from the marriage liturgies which praised the union between man and woman as reflecting the union between Jesus and his people. The Sarum ritual from Catholic England provided a blessing for the marriage bed and for the bride that she might be vigorous and pleasing in bed—a blessing that today we would doubtless want to extend to men. While the Anglican



“The Christian Staple,” ceramic sculpture by Herb Weaver

ritual of the Book of Common Prayer follows Sarum closely, it discreetly omits such references.

In any contest between St. Augustine and Sarum for the bodies of the common people, Sarum was bound to win. But surely the Sarum tradition and what it stands for cannot have survived to the present, can it? Does not everyone know that Catholics are sexually repressed and that Catholic husbands and wives do not enjoy marital sex? Like a lot of other things "everyone" knows about Catholics, this happens not to be true. Or to put the matter more cautiously, while Catholics may be sexually repressed, they are on the average less likely to be sexually repressed than other Americans.

According to two different national surveys, Catholics have sex more often than other Americans, are more playful in their erotic amusements than others and apparently enjoy sex with their spouse more than do others.

Moreover if I use my GRACE scale I can account for all of the differences between Catholics and others in their sexual pleasures. Catholics seem to enjoy sex more, precisely because they have more benign religious images. I do not claim that they are aware of the link between their enjoyment of sex and religious images; metaphors work usually on the preconscious level. Yet one can hardly find a better proof that religion is imagery before it's anything else and after it's everything else.

A new school in the psychology of religion, which bases itself on the so-called attachment theory of psychological maturation, supports my perspective. A happy and playful attachment between mother and baby prepares the child for similar attachments later in life, especially to God, who is in some sense a surrogate mother—an all-powerful source of love and reassurance. Prof. Lee A. Kirkpatrick of the College of William and Mary has suggested recently that Catholicism is an

especially powerful religious heritage on the imaginative level precisely because it offers so many objects of potential attachment. It has been suggested that the most powerful of all the objects of attachment is the metaphor of Mary the Mother of Jesus representing the mother love of God.

I believe that is absolutely right, although some progressive Catholics have tried to play down the role of Mary in the Catholic

Stories
are the way
humans
explain reality
to themselves.

The
more
and better
our stories,
the better
our
intelligence.

tradition lest it offend our ecumenical dialogue partners. Research on Catholic young people reveals that the Mary image continues to be their most powerful religious image. Who would not find appealing a religion which suggests that God loves us like a mother loves a little child? Who would not be enchanted by a story which suggests that we are, as the Chicago theologian John Shea has argued, not just creatures, not just sinners, but more than anything, beloved children?

When I was in grammar school in the mid-1930s, the nuns told a story that sums up why people stay Catholic. One day Jesus went on a

tour of the heavenly city and noted that there were certain new residents who ought not to be there, not until they had put in a long time in purgatory and some of them only on a last-minute appeal. He stormed out to the gate where Peter was checking the day's intake on his Compaq 486DX Deskpro computer (I have edited the nuns' story)—next to which, on his work station, was a fishing pole and a papal crown.

"You've failed again, Simon Peter," said the Lord.

"What have I done now?"

"You let a lot of people in that don't belong."

"I didn't do it."

"Well, who did?"

"You won't like it."

"Tell me anyway."

"I turn them away from the front gate and then they go around to the back door and your mother lets them in!"

It is the religious sensibility behind that fanciful story that explains why Catholics remain Catholic. It might not be your religious sensibility. But if you want to understand Catholics—and if Catholics want to understand themselves—the starting point is to comprehend the enormous appeal of that sensibility. It's the stories.

Andrew M. Greeley is a professor of sociology at the University of Chicago and the University of Arizona. His book Religion as Poetry, on which this essay is based, will be published by Transaction Publishers.

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About the Artwork—While an art professor at Brescia College, Kentucky, ceramics artist Herb Weaver won the Helen Hart Grant for Faculty Development. These pieces are part of the body of work he created with that grant which he titled, "Comparing Catholic and Mennonite Faiths Through Art."



artwork by Carrie Lynelle Thomas

Baby (The look from Dad and Black Jesus)

by Carrie Lynelle Thomas

Chapter 1 short; a conversation with Black Jesus

Babies, babies—you all are my little babies
says my black Jesus
He isn't pretend cause I can see him.
You know Daddy you can't keep treating me like this.
"Baby, you are a child in my eyes and I will watch over you."

Chapter 2 short; talking about Daddies

Sometimes I just feel like crying. Just in the middle of doing nothing
in particular.
Cry my blue eyes out.
I know I've been a failure
I just feel more so in my daddy's eyes.
I just can't do good—
Even though I am his daughter.
I wonder if daddy was a failure in his daddy's eyes.
Is it passed on to be disappointed?

Chapter 3 short; On being jealous, envious or crazy?

Baby sister is a gem or jewel in my parents' eyes
Me . . . I love her but . . .
Baby brother achieves everything and is proud.
Maybe being first isn't being a winner, at least
not in this family race.

Chapter 4 short; Talking with Master racism

Being a baby—mixed—shuffled-up colors.
Black, brown, purple. I see all these white babies
in their cradles—me . . . I was different.
Daddy walks in, picks me up—
"That's not your daddy, he's the wrong color—"
Little white baby I want to slap
your flat head.
Bi-Bi-Biracial. Ha Ha
You a mixed oreo cookie
You sure are pale.
But what an afro.

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GRATEFUL FOR BLANK, WHITE WALLS

by Phyllis
Pellman Good



Christmas banner, designed by Marlisa Yoder-Bontrager.

Is there any place for art in Mennonite church buildings? Art, that is, that's been created by the congregation's members.

Marlisa Yoder-Bontrager believes that congregational life can be enlarged and enhanced by inviting members to make or assemble visual art pieces for the buildings in which they gather and worship. She speaks from experience. "People need a lot of encouragement to find their creative parts. It's a problem that goes back to first grade. School educates creativity and imagination out of people. We're told there are right ways to do things." Despite that stark assessment, she has managed to inspire others in her fellowship.

Yoder-Bontrager's work at the East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, has included creating a long-armed mobile which swayed delicately through a 20-foot square of airspace over the congregation. Balanced in flight from the mobile's arms were dozens of paper cranes, folded into shape by the children of the congregation.

At Christmas she designed a 15-foot long paper banner, drawn to look like a stained glass window and made to hang behind the pulpit area. Marlisa and her husband, Daryl, and their two elementary-aged children colored the entire stretch of paper on their living room floor. Hung at an angle from the wall so that it was partly lit from behind, the banner brought celebration to the gathered congregation, but also powerful proof that visual creativity lies not only in the hands of an elite few.

Remembering her family's aching arms and calloused fingers, Marlisa took her next paper banner to the Visual Arts Sunday school class she was leading. Youth group members, young parents, and junior high-ers

worked elbow to elbow with crayons, covering every patch of the paper to create a translucent banner that hung from floor to ceiling at Easter time. It, too, in its spirit and making, belonged to the congregation.

Without Marlisa's passion, the projects, as well as the full involvement of so many people, would likely not have happened. The Yoder-Bontragers are currently living in Honduras on an MCC assignment, and the congregation has not replaced her leadership. "It's really hard work, but I'm driven by it," Marlisa reflected. "The crane idea had been around for a long time, and I just couldn't put it to rest.

In the congregation she is as eager to include others in creating visually as she is to express her own artistic vision. "I remember when I found the phrase, 'worship center.' It was a feeling I had, and then I found the words. It's a collection of things around a theme—Back-to-School Sunday, Music Sunday, Labor Day. Members bring objects symbolic of what they do or imagine, and simply arrange them. I like the idea because people who don't think they are artistic can be part of it. Even if they can't draw, they can select objects and position them."

Marlisa tries to satisfy her own artistic standards while still accommodating the interests and varying abilities of the other members in the church. "I try to stay away from traditional images. Or I push myself to go a step farther. That's a discipline in itself.

"If I'm stuck, I talk to Daryl. Often I come up with an idea; then I talk to him and he'll add another dimension or layer that enriches it. He's also the technical person. He's faster with the saw and stapler. And he didn't know he had all that within him before this!"

While the church has often been



Yovanna Yoder-Bontrager at work on a wall mural.

seen as the squelcher of creativity, particularly the visual arts among Mennonites, Yoder-Bontrager sees another possible track. "Maybe the church can lead the way, tapping persons who feel comfortable doing these sorts of thing and calling it out of others."

But modern Mennonite meeting-houses present a new dilemma, according to Marlisa. "The problem is our 'well modulated' churches. Everything is so coordinated that people don't feel 'called' to work in the spaces. They are too 'perfect.' I mean, would you have the nerve to put something in a mauve and blue hallway that might be orange and green? I am so grateful that our church has lots of blank white walls. It invites people to put something there."

I Love My Community

by Louise Stoltzfus



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Decisive career person and devoted Amish woman. At first glance and even after extensive study, most people would conclude that nothing in Amish thought or practice allows for this combination.

But I find it embodied in a forty-year-old woman I first met when both of us were teaching in one-room Amish schools.

It was the mid-1970s. I had taken the day off from my own teaching responsibilities to visit other Amish schools and gather ideas. I knew Rebecca by reputation,

having talked to her on occasion at one or another of our teachers' get-togethers. Because she was considered one of the best teachers in the Lancaster Amish community at that time, I decided to stop by her school. Struck by the abundance of fine, freehand paintings lining the walls of the one-room building, I asked her how it happened that she had so many artists as students.

"Well," she said, "I show them how, but they also have lots of natural talent. It is there inside them. You just have to draw it out." I remember being determined

to impart something of equal value to the youngsters in my charge.

Twenty years later, as we sit opposite each other in Rebecca's kitchen on a late summer evening, I recount the event to jog her memory. She thinks she might remember, but she cannot quite make the connection. There is no reason why she should. I have been gone for many years. Our lives are very different than they were in the 1970s.



I next saw Rebecca soon after I returned to Lancaster County in the late 1980s. Looking to furnish a house, I often attended Amish estate auctions, sometimes also finding artifacts which reminded me of my life among the Amish.

At one such auction, I decided to bid on an old, rather tattered-looking basket. It was like the basket my mother carried on her arm to every church service I could remember as a child. In it she usually kept fresh diapers and a change of clothes for the baby, but she also always packed a small container of Cheerios which I was permitted to eat halfway through the four-hour service. Dry Cheerios still remind me of sitting close by my mother on long Sunday mornings.

I paid twelve dollars for the basket. As the runner brought it back to me in the crowd, an Amish woman, standing directly in front of me, turned and said, "If you would like to get that fixed, there are some people who can make those baskets look like new." It was Rebecca. I thanked her, too embarrassed to tell her who I was or to tell her that I preferred for it to look old. No doubt she thought she had spoken to just another collector of Amish antiques.

As we sit together in her kitchen, I still do not tell her that story.



Instead, I ask whether she thinks of herself as a career woman. Without a moment's hesitation, she says, "Yes."

These days Rebecca works long hours as a medical assistant to a non-Amish, Harvard-trained genetics researcher, Dr. Holmes Morton. They operate a clinic and high-tech care facility in the heart of the Amish community in Lancaster County's southern end.

She is single. When she leaves work behind and escapes to her oasis, she is surrounded by her family in an enclave of buildings which includes a large farmhouse where her brother and his wife live. A smaller attached house where her parents live in retirement. And across the lawn her own small house. That is where I find her.

She is pleasant and direct.

Passionate and deliberate.

Philosophical and matter-of-fact.



Four years ago, after having spent fifteen years as an Amish schoolteacher, she decided to change course. The chance to work with Dr. Morton was too good to turn down.

Her voice rises several octaves as she hones in on the compelling ambition of her current life. "Our goal is to make high-tech medical care readily accessible to those people who need it most. Much of the equipment in our laboratory is found in only a few other places in the world. But there it stands in the middle of an Amish farmer's field."

The clinic has several part-time employees, but it is basically a two-person operation. Most of the patients are either local Amish or Mennonites, but its work is known throughout the medical community, and Rebecca says, "We have diagnosed patients from all over the United States."

They are on a quest to stabilize the effects of genetic disorders among the Amish. To bring hope to suffering parents. To bring healing to suffering children. "I happen to have five nieces and nephews who have glutaric aciduria, a debilitating genetic problem. All appeared completely normal and healthy at birth. Two have died. Of the three who are still living, one walks and talks and is only lightly afflicted. The other two are in wheelchairs."

It is easy to identify the source of Rebecca's passion. Like most Amish, she considers caring for children and preserving the quality of their lives tantamount to godliness.

Though she has no children of her own, Rebecca is surrounded by little people. At work she pours all her energies into their care. Her one-year-old niece hovers around her feet as we talk, occasionally climbing into Rebecca's lap to be held and snuggled. The unmistakable sounds of little ones at play drift through the screen door from the lawn in front of her brother's house. She turns to me and says, "Being a homemaker is the most important job a woman can possibly have."

"But I also know that God chose for me to be single. I believe it is important to be useful in my sphere. What I care about is keeping children well."



Keeping children well. Rebecca says the two main genetic disorders which the clinic addresses—maple syrup urine disease and glutaric aciduria—can be controlled if they are identified. For that reason, her job also includes education. Getting the word out to the Amish community that infants should be tested at birth has been one focus of her work. Getting the word out to the medical community which services the Lancaster County Amish has been another focus.

I ask her how those goals are accomplished.

She talks to Amish women. At church services. At family reunions. At weddings. At quiltings. At funerals. "Ask for the test when your child is born," she urges them.

If parents learn at birth that a newborn has glutaric aciduria, Rebecca says, the chances of keeping the child well increase dramatically. For it is the usual childhood diseases—measles, mumps, common colds, or ear infections—which cause the crippling brain damage of this particular disorder.



Dr. Morton's clinic stands in the heart of the Amish community. It charges very little for its services. And it employs one of their own, a woman whom the Amish know and trust. For those reasons, Amish parents are much more likely to call the doctor when they suspect their child may need immediate medical attention.

"It is part of my job to coordinate care over the telephone. If I suspect that a child is in danger, I give immediate instructions about either bringing the child to us or taking it to a hospital." The emotion in Rebecca's voice leaves no doubt that an Amish parent would follow her instructions.

She also confronts local medical personnel. Nothing infuriates her more than hearing that a doctor neglected to perform the simple thirty-five dollar test on an Amish baby at birth. When she learns of such cases, she calls and asks for an explanation. It is their job as medical professionals to urge their patients to take this test, even if the parents might want to save the money.

their job as
their patients to
parents might
"Whenever I
hear about
someone
among us
who
hesitates to
have the test
done, I sit
them down and
tell them the
story of my sister's
family."

Rebecca does not
fear confrontation. In
fact, she thrives on it.

◆ ◆ ◆
In addition to her
area of expertise,
she also has
opinions about
many other
subjects
affecting

Amish life.
And she
seeks out
forums to
state them.

She
writes
letters to
the editor.

Several
months
before I
visited with
Rebecca,
one of the
local
newspapers
reported the

story of a near-fatal mishap for a seventeen-year-old Amish boy. During a hike in the woods, the young man ran against a bush and ended up with a thorn imbedded under his skin. Not recognizing the danger, his mother treated him by removing the thorn and applying an ointment. Several days later he came down with a severe case of lockjaw and was rushed to the hospital, near death.

The local journalist who reported the story chose an unfortunate slant. He claimed the problem was caused by the fact that some Amish elect not to go through the normal round of immunizations for their children.

Many non-Amish folks in the local community were upset, and we found ourselves asking such questions as, "Do all of your children and young people have current tetanus shots? If you fell into a bush, would you think to get a tetanus shot?" We thought it unfair to position the problem as peculiar to the Amish.

Rebecca was upset for a very different reason.

"I could not believe how that reporter completely missed the point. He had a golden opportunity to inform the public of the need for keeping tetanus shots current. He had a chance to educate. He missed it."

She wrote an articulate, highly charged letter to the editor, which included not one word of defense for her people, but which urged everyone—Amish, as well as non-Amish—to update tetanus shots. She had seized the day. Her opinion was heard.

◆ ◆ ◆

Rebecca also sometimes attends local township meetings.

When an issue comes before a township government which affects them, numerous Amish may attend. However, they seldom speak up during a public meeting.

Several years ago the township where Rebecca lives was struggling with a development question which promised to have a negative impact on several Amish farmers. The media devoured the story. The developers, commissioners, and land preservationists went after each other with a vengeance. The Amish, it seemed to me, were caught in the middle, mere pawns in the struggle.

So I was surprised to open my paper one morning and discover a photo of Rebecca with microphone in hand, addressing the meeting. Fervent in her defense of the preservation of farmland, she pled for the supervisors to carefully consider their decision. The development was denied at the time, but later granted to a different nearby acreage.

I find Rebecca's actions unusual, but, as I sit across from her, I am no longer surprised.

She is independent.

Determined.

Outspoken.

Intense.

◆ ◆ ◆

Those are personality traits, it seems to me, which fit for a person with a high energy, successful career. "Do they fit with being an Amish woman?" is the question I

cannot let go.

In my search for an answer, Rebecca and I talk about a difficult-to-understand dynamic in Amish life. On its surface, Amish life thrives because, among other reasons: 1) people are born Amish, and it is difficult to leave; 2) church members learn to submit to the absolute will of the community; and 3) church leaders extend a severe form of punishment—shunning—to those who digress.

Those are facts, ideas, and actions which appear to be the underlying pillars that support life among the Amish. However, a search beneath the surface reveals much more benevolent anchors for this community.



Children are encouraged to stay Amish, yes, but they are also given freedom to explore the larger world. Many Amish young people do lots of experimenting during their teen years—they party, they drink and smoke, they learn to enjoy country music, they play guitars and banjos and drums, they practice bundling, a courtship custom where the young people sleep together without undressing.

Many parents stand by, urging their children to be careful, to consider conforming, and to be faithful. Many other parents are more strict, forbidding their children to participate in the experimentation. A few parents expect the “sowing of some wild oats,” as they call it.

Some Amish young folks are lost to the Amish way forever. But many, many more eventually choose to change their ways and settle into long, fruitful years of being Amish. But they have not been coerced; they have made a free choice to be Amish.



Neither do members of the Amish church blindly submit to decisions made by the leaders without asking questions. Discussions about what new inventions, ideas, or habits should be permitted to enter community life are constant and involve everyone.

Women talk about them at quiltings and reunions. Men talk about them at barnraisings and haymakings. Husbands consult their wives. Preachers, often influenced by an abundance of freely stated opinions, get together and decide.

Once a decision is made, however, people are expected to conform. Those who decide not to conform or to leave will be confronted by church leaders.



To many Amish, the practice of shunning is a painful reminder that they are not perfect. To those of us who are not Amish, it is sometimes a temptation to believe that being Amish must be synonymous with oppression and strictness and lack of choice. It seems to us unlikely, or even impossible, that such a society could produce women like Rebecca.

Indeed, leaving the Amish church is not easy; it is painful; it is often a time of high emotion. In reality, though, it is not that different from leaving any other strong religious community—whether Jewish or

Catholic, fundamentalist or southern Baptist. Most wounds heal with time, and those who leave, most often rebuild their connections to family members who are still Amish.

Among the Lancaster County Amish, the enforcement of shunning has always been layered with technical details. Few families disown a shunned person. Rather, they remain closely connected and conform to the church’s requirements by holding up the letter of the law. For example, they don’t sit down at a table with a shunned person, but they will eat at a different table in the same room. They cannot ride in a car driven by the person who has been excommunicated. But they can ride with the shunned person in his or her car as long as someone else drives.

Some Amish question the wisdom of such technicalities and wish the church would reconsider its positions. Many more believe obeying the letter of the law is a way to “keep the peace” and choose, therefore, quietly to adapt.

While the Amish world appears tightly held together, its ability to compromise and negotiate and allow for exceptions is its lifeline. It is filled with people such as Rebecca who are highly self-expressed and who love being Amish.

So it seems to me that oppression, strictness, and lack of choice actually have very little to do with life among the Amish. Most Amish women and men find deep fulfillment in their lives, would not want to live any other way, and frequently find themselves wondering how we people “of the world” can survive with our fragmentation and fragile communities and lack of faith.



I have seen through a small window—through a glass darkly—into this woman’s life. Her ability to express her opinions is a vital element of her wholeness, of her complete self. She has learned well how to do that within the confines of Amish life.

Rebecca muses briefly and says, “For me, it fits.”

I look around her kitchen. At her furniture. At her mementos. At her decorations. This is certainly a place deeply immersed in Amish society.

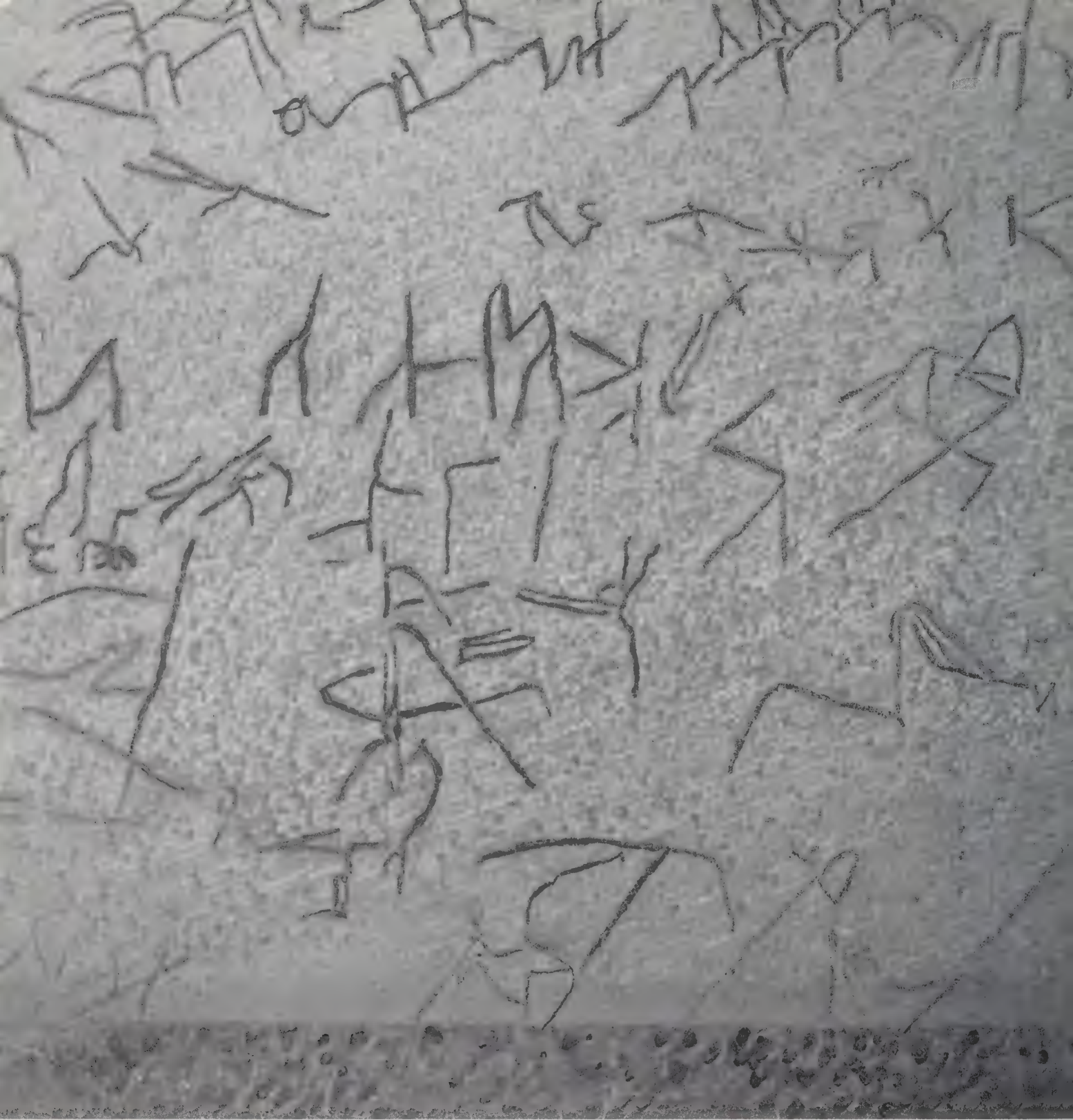
Her young nephew walks up onto the front porch, struggling with a garden hose. In the dialect, she asks, what is he trying to do? He responds also in the dialect, “*Ich wills nei wickla fah dich*” (I want to wrap it up for you).

She thanks him, telling him if it’s too difficult she can do it later. He accomplishes his feat and goes happily back to his parents’ home.

Rebecca’s voice quivers and drops several octaves as she looks directly at me, “I love my family, my community, and my church. In my soul, I am probably much more Amish than you might think.”

I know that she is right. I am glad to know she loves her world. I am glad to discover that being Amish fits for Rebecca.

Excerpted from Amish Women: Lives and Stories by Louise Stoltzfus. Good Books, Intercourse, PA © 1994.



Warren Rohrer, *Field: Language 8*, 1991, oil on linen, 54¹/₄ x 54³/₈

This Artist Let His Work Talk for Him

by Edward J. Sozanski
art critic for *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

Picasso once remarked that everything anyone needed to know about him was in his art. I have always believed this to be essentially true for all artists. While the artist's life is often fascinating as biography, his or her work encodes and transmits the meaning of that life. And it's through interaction with the work that our lives are enriched.

Whatever an artist's life may appear to be, his or her work represents the truth of it, the core of belief, even when that belief lacks substance. An artist's public life and his or her studio life aren't always congruent; when they don't agree, better to trust what comes out of the studio.

With some artists, that's all you have to go on anyway. Even in this age of careerist self-promotion and ego gratification, they prefer to speak only through their art. These artists are perhaps harder to know, but also more worth knowing.

Warren Rohrer, who died February 21, was such an artist. Rohrer was a Philadelphia painter of considerable visual gifts and intelligence who declined to create advertisements for himself.

It might have cost him a wider reputation in the short run, but he must have understood that eventually his work would have to speak for him. If it lacked merit, posterity wouldn't care how assiduously he had courted attention while he was alive.

I knew Rohrer, as I know most artists, only through his work, which during my time in Philadelphia, he exhibited periodically at Marian Locks Gallery, now Locks Gallery. I met him only twice, and on neither of those occasions did he use the opportunity to speak about his painting.

What did the work tell me? That Rohrer was profoundly connected to the land, that he practiced painting as a metaphysical pursuit, that he was a meticulous craftsman, and that he believed that art-making was a process of self-discovery.

Rohrer, who worked abstractly for nearly 25 years, obviously believed that there was more to the act of painting than making pictures. His most recent works suggest minimal landscapes grounded in real places, but they also could be read as evocations of a primal spirit connected with living intimately on the land.

In these paintings, Rohrer used soft, light-generating colors and delicate touch to create a mood of reverence, mystery, and emotional force. In his mid-60s, he continued to innovate, develop, and refine. A 1993 show at Locks, which proved to be his last, demonstrated that he deserved to be ranked with the leading painters of his time.

In the process of compiling material for Rohrer's obituary, I learned things about him that confirmed my reading of his work. These facts didn't alter my assessment of it; they only fleshed out a life whose value had been demonstrated through his painting.

For instance, I discovered that Rohrer was reared in a Mennonite family that could trace its Lancaster County roots to the early 18th century. He grew up in Smoketown, a village near Bird-in-Hand. While he didn't live on a farm, he was, his wife says, "a real nature kid who grew up roving the pastures and small streams. He developed a great love for cultivated land."

Anyone who has spent much time in Lancaster County can appreciate how a poetic soul such as Rohrer might

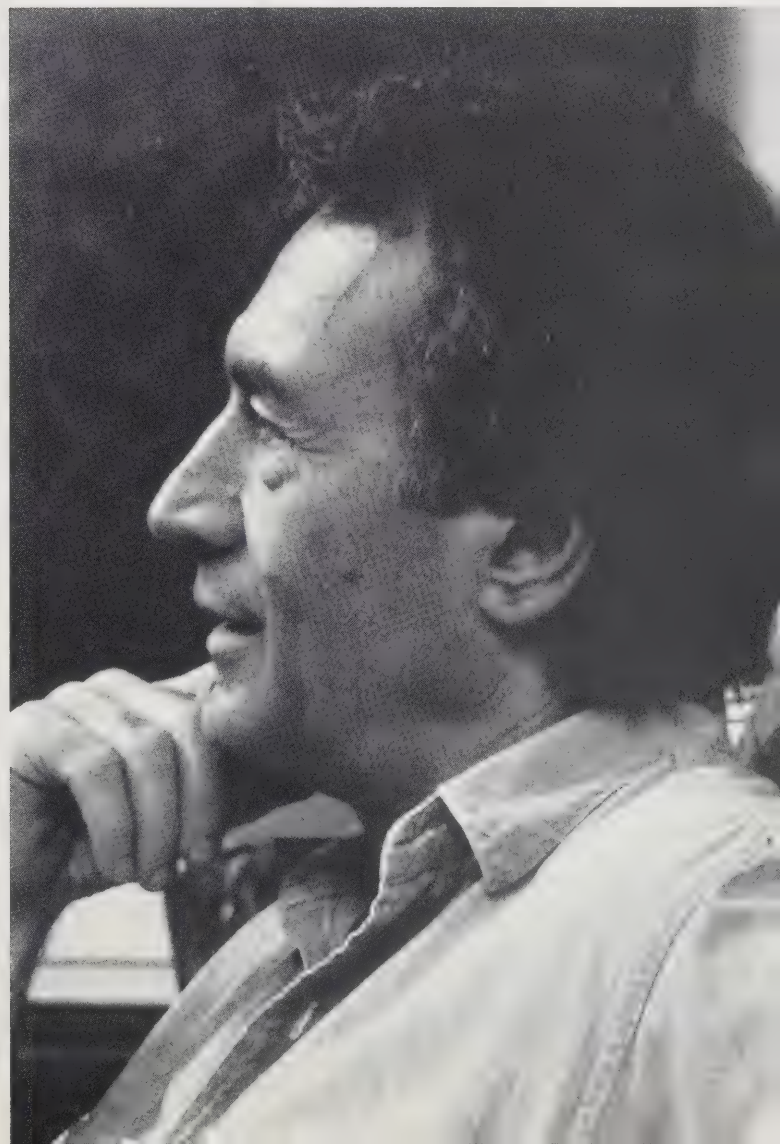
develop a powerful affection for the patterns and practices of husbandry. A romantic fixation on wild nature has always been more common among artists than one on farming, so his bonding was unusual.

Rohrer was supposed to become a Mennonite minister. He attended a Mennonite school in Lancaster, then was packed off to Eastern Mennonite College in Harrisonburg, in the Blue Ridge country of western Virginia.

There, he met Jane Turner, whom he married in 1948, earned a bachelor's degree in Bible study, and discovered art, which became his new career path. He earned a second degree, in art education at James Madison College in Virginia, and in 1953 moved to Rose Valley in Delaware County to become a painter-teacher.

That role is well-known to many artists, who trade studio time for the security of regular employment. Rohrer was always teaching somewhere until 1992, when he retired from the University of the Arts after many years as professor of painting.

He's remembered fondly by many former students as an important influence on their lives. While some artists profess to enjoy teaching, it's difficult to imagine one who would choose to remain in the classroom if full-time devotion to art were a viable option. And yet the artist who has a teaching job, even part-time without benefits, is considered lucky, for there are far more artists than jobs related to art-making.



Jane Rohrer said her husband would cut back on his teaching when their financial circumstances allowed him to do so. He was able to work regularly, to respond to stimuli in his environment, and to convert those stimuli into aesthetic progression—all that an artist needs, really.

Rohrer had always painted the landscape, and in 1961 he moved his family to a small farm near Christiana, about 17 miles southeast of Lancaster, so he could immerse himself in it.

Ironically, living on the land moved him away from a descriptive response to the landscape—the kind of painting being done in Philadelphia now by Randall Exon and Jeffrey Reed. Instead, Rohrer went the other way, toward a distillation of the landscape spirit into pure color, light, and atmosphere.

As his wife says, “He just left the subject matter behind and began to use the canvas as a field.”

This “frustration with the limitations of pictorial references,” in her phrase, was the major turning point of his career. Beginning in the early 1970s, he began to paint pure abstractions that were stark color fields. Subsequently, he softened them with marks, layering of pigments, and faint horizon lines.

Even though the new style initially seemed far removed from his natural influences, Marian Locks, his dealer saw a link through his palette. Rohrer collected Amish quilts, and Locks believes that his color sense derived from them. Her observation is at least consistent with the evidence of his paintings.

Shifting to abstraction in midcareer was a major risk. Only an artist determined to place aesthetic concern ahead of all others, and who had the courage to do so, would have made such a leap. It proved to be a fruitful decision, because Rohrer’s painting grew richer and more complex during the 1970s and ’80s.

Yet, working abstractly is itself a risk because the public is less understanding of it. Rohrer might have sold better, particularly to corporate clients, had he continued to work in what Locks described as an “impressionist” style. But that style proved too limiting for him, and he opted to follow his instincts.

His willingness to take risks, along with his honesty and intellectual rigor, was one of the qualities that endeared Rohrer to collector Daniel Dietrich. “Among the artists I know, he is really of a high order,” Dietrich said. “Like [Thomas] Eakins, he represents a very high engagement of an artist’s morality and sense of self.”

It remains now to assess the magnitude of his achievement. As Dietrich says, “Sometimes it takes an artist’s death to focus the mind. It’s a tragedy that his work could not have been more honored in his lifetime. It will provide me with enormous solace and strength. The work will survive, and not only survive, it will prevail.”

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Memorial Observance for E. Warren Rohrer, 1927-1995

excerpts from a meditation by John L. Ruth

In the lifelong work of Philadelphia artist E. Warren Rohrer, whose roots were in the Mellinger’s community near the Mill Creek, was a profound, unfolding evocation of a human dialogue with the earth. Possibly alerted by deafness in his family to enhance his visual gifts, and wrestling to experience what lay deeper than speech and prior to vision, Rohrer left a unique witness in his paintings of the 1970s and ’80s, though more available to a sophisticated audience than to the landed farmers among whom his own vision had been born.

He told me once, several decades ago, that it was when he had learned to see that he could feel “born again.” So while I journeyed into the heart of our ancestral church fellowship, he went on the lonelier quest in which, he repeatedly said, he was accountable only to his art.

“The subject of the work is the act of painting itself. . . .” A painting “doesn’t have to be anything other than what it is. . . . It is the tradition of art-making that I’m responsible to.”

“My dialogue is with art itself. . . . My present [1993] paintings are two paintings that look the same, but they aren’t. There’s a dialogue between the two of them. There’s a dialogue between those paintings and the artist, and a dialogue between those two paintings and the viewer. My paintings are about stroke, stroke, stroke. . . . It has to do with the cells in the air. It has to do with the molecules.”

Warren went back in imagination to the field before the mill at Greenland where we had first met, and traversed it like a farm-boy plowing, with patience, curiosity, and humility. He first explained this to us when we visited him and Jane at Christiana in the ’60s. “If my ancestors could live by repeated strokes of stitching, weaving, or plowing, why should I consider myself any better than them?”

When I hear a black-hatted Old Order Mennonite farmer-preacher say, “I always liked land,” I think of Warren. “I’m still indebted to the landscape,” he mused a few years ago. “I’m engaged in a dialogue between what I’m indebted to and what I’m rejecting . . . I’m not a Mennonite, but I consider myself a Mennonite.”

Warren’s achievements should prompt us Mennonites to ask, How in our tradition, have we been grateful for beauty? Iconoclasts though our forbears may have been, do we really believe that the physical splendor of the earth is here as a distraction from what is important?

John L. Ruth, Harleysville, PA, gave a meditation at two memorial services for Warren Rohrer, one on March 4, 1995 at Community Mennonite Church, Lancaster, PA, and the other on March 5, 1995 at Marian Locks Gallery, Philadelphia, PA. He did that at Warren Rohrer’s request.

On Composing— An Open Letter to My Nephew Jeremy

by Carol Ann Weaver

Dear Jeremy,

Here I sit in what has become both my prison and palace—the workroom where I compose. It's cluttered with everything from synthesizer keyboards and manuals to tape recorders, tapes, and books to dirty laundry and sewing scraps across the room to headphones so I can work while others sleep. Here I work, often until three or four in the morning, causing coughs, colds, flu, and music which is my lifeblood.

You asked about composing—whether or not to continue. I can only say, if it doesn't burn in your heart and soul, don't bother with it. Nothing I do demands more time, rewarding me with sleepless nights, crazy ecstasy, insane joy, and relentless energy. It's a voice inside that has to be made into sound. So if it doesn't whisper to you, call you out of bed, murmur quietly, lure you, or scream at you, don't worry about composing. You've got plenty else to do in your life. Some people write music because they perform. Others write long before they perform. But one thing I'm sure of, you can't push composing. It either wants you, or it doesn't.

And just when you may think you're getting somewhere with your music, the rules may change on you. Right now, for me, it's new music software (*Finale*) on which I just finished scoring a piece for flute, cello, and piano called *Rites of Africa*. I haven't worked this slowly in years. With new software, a single bar may take, on the average, well over an hour to score. I used to use India ink, vellum paper, and technical pens for scoring. Then I yielded to the 1980s state-of-the-art computer program (*Professional Composer*) which became badly out-of-date in several years. So I switched to *Finale*, which is like learning a new language.

When I'm older I hope to go back to pen and ink. There is a spiritual high in crafting things by hand—sort of like sewing. Alvin Toffler in his 1970 classic, *Future Shock*, suggests

that in our era of change one needs to keep something constant, such as using the same toothpaste. My “same toothpaste,” besides Aquafresh, is the acoustic piano. It doesn't have to be turned on. Tuned out, the sound is even more interesting. And because its tone color is rather constant, one can imagine all sorts of timbres and instrumental sounds. So I compose on the piano. A bit like working in black and white while dreaming in color. I also sing and walk a lot as I make up music. How fortunate if you can actually carry your instrument around, like the bass!

I once had a dream in which I was going to a composition lesson. The closer I got to my teacher's house, the deeper the water became, and I had to keep swimming against the current to get there. I guess I kept swimming, because I'm still in the water. Wish I could say I do a lot of floating. Maybe when I'm older.

P.S. Happy as I was to get the new software figured out, it doesn't compare with my getting the sewing machine bobbin to work today! Lots of people work with electronic music but none of my neighbors sew anymore. Wonder if it's like writing with ink?

**Jeremy Kurtz is a 17-year-old, up-and-coming bassist from Manassas, Virginia.*



Carol Ann Weaver is a pianist, composer, and teacher of music at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario.

A VISUAL FEAST



THE PEOPLE'S PLACE GALLERY

If you would like to see a cross-section of some of the finest work being done by Mennonite-related artists, just write to us for the 15-minute slide presentation called “Art '94.” This is a service provided free of charge by our Gallery. The artists represented in “Art '94” are:

Eva Beidler
Jewell Gross Brenneman
Paul Brubaker
Kristen Diener
Ray Dirks
Tim Dyck
Chad Friesen
Jake Goertzen
Nigel Green
Gordon L. Groff
Rodney Harder
Robert E. Helsel
David Peter Hunsberger
Juanita Y. Kauffman
Ruth Ann Meyers Kulp
Lisa Snow Lady
Dick Lehman
Naomi Limont
Darvin Luginbuhl
Gregg Luginbuhl
Renny Magill
Velma Magill
Dennis Maust
John Mishler
Becky Nordvall
Dawn J. Ranck
Arlie J. Regier
Grace Rempel
Marcia Rempel
Sandy Zeiset Richardson
Gene Schmidt
Rebecca Thut
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Erma Martin Yost
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YES, please send me reservation information for the 15-minute slide presentation “Art '94.”

Name _____
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(Mail this coupon to The People's Place Gallery, 3519 Old Philadelphia Pike, Intercourse, PA 17534.)

The Jacksons Write for a Junior High Audience



Dave and Neta Jackson working in their home office. Their pet ferret watches from Dave's lap.

In October of 1994, *Bookstore Journal*, the trade publication of Christian Booksellers Association (CBA), included a one-page feature on Dave and Neta Jackson. The Jacksons, who have been members of Reba Place Church for 22 years, work together as full-time writers.

Several years ago Broadman & Holman Publishing approached the Jacksons to write companion books for

a video series Broadman was planning. The Secret Adventure videos appeal to children from about age five through junior high.

The Jacksons' task has been to take each half-hour video and transform it into a 12- to 13-chapter book, primarily for a junior high audience. While both the videos and books are written from a Christian perspective, Neta Jackson noted in an interview with *Festival Quarterly*, "We avoided religious language and tried, instead, to have one of the

characters come up with a nugget of wisdom which gave the main character—a young girl—an underpinning for her life. In other words, we hope young people will conclude that God takes care of the sparrow so he certainly also cares about junior high problems." Four of the five books have been published.

Another project which consumes a great deal of their time these days is a

20-title fictionalized biography series for Bethany House Publishing called Trailblazer Books. This series, which Neta Jackson describes as "quite close to our hearts," is also written for junior-high-age kids.

Each book finds the youthful main character encountering a hero of the faith—men and women such as David Livingstone, Amy Carmichael, Harriet Tubman, and Menno Simons. During their research on the historical characters, the Jacksons looked for evidence of a real person—young boy or girl—who could become the main character of their book. For example, the main character of the David Livingstone book—*Escape from the Slave Traders*—is one of the actual slaves rescued by Livingstone.

Whenever they could not find an actual person, they created a fictional young person, typical of someone who might have lived in the time period. For example, the main character of the John Wesley book—*The Chimney Sweep's Ransom*—is a young member of a coal-mining family in northern England.

Dave Jackson noted that junior high boys are particularly difficult to engage so the books are action-adventure. "We look for a 'window of opportunity' where the main character of our adventure story can meet the 'hero of the faith.'" By the end of March 1995, Bethany House will have published 16 of the 20 titles in the Jacksons' Trailblazer series. —LS



Curator Louise Stoltzfus holds Barbara Ebersol's crutches and personal *Ausbund* while discussing plans for an exhibition featuring the work and story of the 19th century Amish folk artists, Barbara Ebersol and Henry Lapp. Exhibit designer Kenny Pellman holds a Henry Lapp watercolor painting and spoon box.

The exhibition—"Two Amish Folk Artists and Quilts from Their Area"—opened in The People's Place Quilt Museum, Intercourse, Pennsylvania, on Friday, March 17, 1995 and continues through October 31, 1995.

"A furniture maker with a knack for watercolor drawings and a woman who painted colored bookplates are the subject of a new exhibit that shows even the austere, hard-working Amish appreciated artists in their midst.

"Henry Lapp and Barbara Ebersol lived within a mile of each other during the late 19th and early 20th century, two faithful members of a farm-rooted community that values life unvarnished with any pretense or ostentation."—Associated Press.

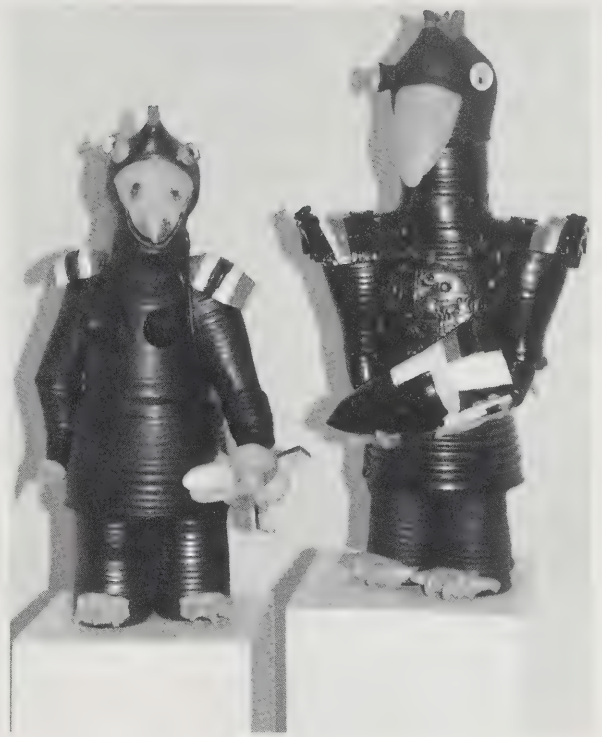
Longtime Ceramic Artist Has Retrospective Show

Darvin Luginbuhl, Bluffton, Ohio, has been creating and selling ceramic pottery and sculptures for more than 30 years. From December 16, 1994 through January 8, 1995, he showed over 50 of the pieces he has created at "A Retrospective Show: Darvin Luginbuhl" in the ArtSpace/ Lima Gallery, Lima, Ohio.



After teaching in public schools in the Bluffton area for 12 years, Luginbuhl joined the art faculty at Bluffton College, teaching most phases of art until his retirement several years ago. Luginbuhl noted, "I have worked in ceramic sculpture and have tried to relate to moral and social issues." Subjects of his work include the environment, religion, war and peace, and the celebration of life. For more than 20 years,

Luginbuhl has donated pieces of his work to Mennonite Central Committee Relief Sales in Ohio. He says, "I have seen this as my special calling." —LS



Landmark Show Opens at The People's Place Gallery

A landmark show featuring the works of six Mennonite women artists opened Friday evening March 24 at The People's Place Gallery, Intercourse, Pennsylvania. Four of the six artists participated in a well attended reception in the Gallery. The show continues through June 10 and will be available for viewing during

the upcoming conference, "The Quiet in the Land?," to be held at Millersville (PA) University, June 8-10.

Works by Erma Martin Yost, Susan Ebersole, Ann Graber Miller, Eva Beidler, Velma Magill, and Sandy Zeiset Richardson portray the diversity of styles, subjects, and media among current Mennonite women artists.

In spite of this diversity, "Six Mennonite Women Artists" holds together as a unit and has an organic integrity. The cohesiveness of the show was acknowledged by many of the artists as they explored the matter of creativity in their life experiences. At a dinner in the artists' honor prior to the reception, Erma Martin Yost commented, "The works go together in a way I could never have expected."

An obvious concern for nature, whether the external nature of a landscape or flora, or the internalized nature of the artist working with her materials, pervades all of the works in this exhibit. Each work is a testimony to the artist's dedication, hard work, and perseverance, whether a painting, ceramic sculpture, or quilt assemblage. Taken together, this exhibit bears witness to and celebrates both the diversity and the commonality in the stories of Mennonite women.



Hymnal

by Emerson L. Leshner

Isn't it great to have a new hymnal? I mean *now* we can sing. However, I was a little disappointed with the title and the color of the cover (blue for those of you who haven't seen it). Unfortunately, the "Blue Book," as many are calling it, has negative images for me. During my college days, professors would hand out "blue books" during examinations and expect me to fill them with intelligent, rational, and coherent thoughts. Now every Sunday morning I think twice as I grab for my "blue" book.

For some, I guess the blue hymnal is an improvement over the red or, what I always thought of as, the "rust" hymnal. I thought rust better reflected who we were as a people. My biggest fear is that some marketing consultant suggested the new hymnal reflect a new day among Mennonites; it should make a "statement" that the days of Mennonites being a little rusty and living in the rust belt are over. The hymnal should reflect the Mennonites of the 1990s—bright, positive, and living in the sun belt.

If we are moving from being a rust belt church to a sun belt church (or sun belt), why not go all the way and pick a color that is clear and sharp in its "statement" about who Mennonites will be in the future? A color that unashamedly and profoundly creates a new identity and image. I mean, why not have them printed in one of several fluorescent pastels, or a color seen on the Geo cars? Or, what about white hymnals? I know white isn't practical, but, hey, we are creating a new identity. We don't need to be practical anymore! Those congregations who still want to retain the practical theology of Mennonitism could attach plastic book covers so they could be periodically cleaned with Windex.

Pushing this a bit further, why not print hymnals in a variety of colors? This would allow each member to choose the color that symbolized their mood or spiritual state on a given Sunday. Hence, one would pick the bench based on the color of the hymnal and one's mood. (This could create some difficulty for some couples and families.) A variety of colors would also

enliven the book racks and add much needed color variation to many Mennonite meetinghouses. The problem with a variety of colors is that some may wear out more quickly due to more frequent use. Also, on some Sunday mornings there may be lots of competition for specific colors.

Now let's turn our analysis to the title selected for the new hymnal. I think it must have been selected by a committee of Anabaptist theologians. You know what they say, "Where there are two Anabaptist theologians, there will be three opinions." I think the title has only one word because, out of all the possible words suggested, the theologians could only agree on one—Hymnal. Since the committee was deadlocked, they had to go with "Hymnal." I find it interesting that the committee could not even agree on "The," so as to title it *The Hymnal*.

Another possible explanation for the use of one word is that the publishers couldn't afford more words. Some believe it was done as an expression of Anabaptist simplicity. Others believe it was done to reduce any possible environmental waste generated by the use of more words.

Let me also bring a much needed feminist critique to the title of the hymnal. While extensive energy and time was put into using inclusive language inside the hymnal, the outside still reflects a patriarchal and male-dominated oppressive statement about whose interests are really being served and who is really intended to use the book. Of course, I am referring to the use of the word "hymnal" (himnal). The title is not inviting to women and reflects subtle and pervasive sexism throughout the church. Weren't there some women on the hymnal committee? How could this happen? To add insult to injury, the hymnal is BLUE and any young parent or child under five knows the social and psychological implications of *blue*—it denotes maleness. At the very least, if it was to be called "Hymnal" rather than "Hernal," it could have been printed in a color other than blue—like pink! An opportunity was missed to communicate an important message to the next generation.

I would like to suggest some alternative titles for *Hymnal*:

- *The Anabaptist Hymnal: The Blue Edition*

- *The Blue Book for Happy Anabaptists*
- *The Top 861 Anabaptist Songs and Readings*

- *How to Sing Anabaptist*
- *Sing an Anabaptist Song Unto the Lord*

- *A Users' Guide to Anabaptist Songs and Worship*

Hymnal not only includes songs, but also worship resources and aids (that's aids, not AIDS). While there are many helpful aids, there are several more I think would have made a much more useful book. For example:

- Prayers to pray during boring sermons

- Readings for mumblers
- Tips on dressing for worship

- Tips on what to do for a crying baby that is not your child

- Tips on what to do for a crying baby that is your child

- The ten most effective disciplinary actions for young children

- Action tips for long sermons
- Suggestions for what to share and not share during sharing time

- What to do if a medical emergency occurs during worship

- What to do if a psychiatric emergency occurs during worship

- What to do if a dental emergency occurs during worship

- Tips on how to pass the offering plate

- How to not act embarrassed when the worship leader asks you to do something weird

- Crossword puzzles

- Math problems
- Detachable "To Do List" notepad

- Tips on how to quietly tear checks from checkbooks.



Emerson L. Leshner is President of Messiah Village, a retirement community near Mechanicsburg, PA.

• A former German army officer (World War II) has written a book about his experiences and his commitment to pacifism which he traces to an experience on the Russian frontline. In *Living with Conviction: German Army Captain Turns to Cultivating Peace*, Siegfried Bartel describes his eight years in the German army, including what he calls his darkest hour—his decision to order the execution of a young Russian soldier. Bartel recounts the story of his struggle to overcome guilt and become convinced that the way of peace is the only alternative to war. Published by CMBC publications, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

• **Allan Eitzen**, longtime freelance artist, is the illustrator of *Alphabestiary*, a children's book compiled by Jane Yolen, winner of the Caldecott Medal for her book, *Owl Moon!* The scribes of the Middle Ages celebrated real and fabled animals in books which they called bestiaries. Eitzen illustrated Yolen's alphabetical collection of poems about animals, creating a bestiary for children of today. Published by Boyds Mills Press.

• Mennonite Central Committee Canada has published *Braiding Hearts and Hands*, an anthology of poems and dramatic readings by women. Subjects include abuse, conflict, hunger, poverty, and the traditional roles of women.

• **Patrick Friesen's** book of poetry *Blasphemer's Wheel: Selected Poems 1980-1994* features a collection of new pieces along with various selections from his earlier books of poetry, *The Shunning* and *You Don't Get to Be a Saint*. Published by Turnstone Press.

• *Stories Behind the News* grew out of **David L. Wagler's** weekly letters to *The Budget*, a newspaper published in Sugarcreek, Ohio, which contains Amish news from many communities. In *Stories Behind the News*, Wagler collects the unedited versions of his letters, presenting a wide cross-section of opinions about Old Order Amish life and understandings. Wagler has been a *Budget* scribe for nearly 50 years, and the topics range from an account of a trip to Alaska to the Amish interpretation of assurance of salvation. Published by Brookside Publishers, Bloomfield, Iowa.

• From Plough Publishing House come two books by **J. Heinrich Arnold** (1913-1982). Compiled and edited by the Hutterian Brethren, *Discipleship* contains more than 300 short excerpts, topically arranged, from the personal letters, articles, sermons, and worship meetings of J. Heinrich Arnold, a respected teacher and elder among the Hutterian Brethren. A small tract-like book, *Freedom from Sinful Thoughts*, also from Arnold's writings, provides practical help.

• First published in English in 1987, *The Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren, Volume I* has been reprinted by Plough Publishing House. The original handwritten German *Chronik* has survived through the centuries and can still be seen in the Bon Homme colony in South Dakota. An invaluable addition to a shelf on Anabaptist and Hutterite history.

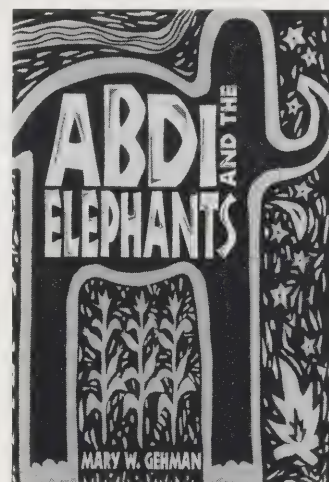
• A new updated "**Directory of Civilian Public Service**" has been published by NISBCO, Suite 1400, 1612 K St. NW, Washington, DC 20006. A group of volunteers spent three years locating approximately 60% of the 12,000 men (alive and deceased) who served as conscientious objectors in CPS 50 years ago. This historic document will be of use to those researching church/state cooperation during the CPS era. Also a nostalgic piece of memorabilia for those who served as conscientious objectors during World War II.

• **Donald B. Kraybill** and **Marc A. Olshan** have edited a collection of essays entitled *The Amish Struggle with Modernity*. Contributors include Kraybill, **Diane Zimmerman Umble**, **David Luthy**, **Steven Nolt**, and **Kimberly Schmidt**. Published by the University Press of New England, Hanover, New Hampshire.

• The *Proceedings of the Conference, Tradition and Transition: an Amish Mennonite Heritage of Obedience* are now available for sale. The conference, held at Metamora, Illinois, in October 1993, addressed various important points in the 300-year history of the Amish. Scholars from the United States and Canada contributed diverse information and insight. This 240-page publication of its major addresses and papers is

available through the Mennonite Heritage Center, Metamora, Illinois.

• **Dale R. Schrag**, **John D. Thiesen**, and **David A. Hauray** have produced a new edition of the 20-page booklet "**The Mennonites: A Brief Guide to Information.**" The booklet provides a concise overview of Anabaptist-Mennonite history, a directory of Mennonite historical libraries and archives, and a bibliography of 75 key Mennonite books and periodicals.



• *Abdi and the Elephants* is a new novel for school-age children. Written by **Mary W. Gehman**, who taught English for more than 20 years in Somalia, it combines the aura of living in Somalia with the story about Abdi, a local farmer.

• The Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College has published *Creative Crusader: Edmund G. Kaufman and Mennonite Community* by **James C. Juhnke**. Kaufman was one of the most influential Mennonite leaders of the mid-twentieth century. Juhnke's biography tells of Kaufman's family, community, his education, and his service to the church.

• The 20th and 21st of the Mennonite Central Committee Occasional Papers have been published. A compilation of seminars presented to MCC staff in Akron, Pennsylvania, by **C. Norman Kraus** compose the 20th paper which is entitled "**A Theological Basis for Intervention Ministries.**" Commissioned by the MCC Overseas Peace Office, the 21st paper is "**Mennonite International Peacemaking During and After the Cold War**" by **J. Robert Charles**.

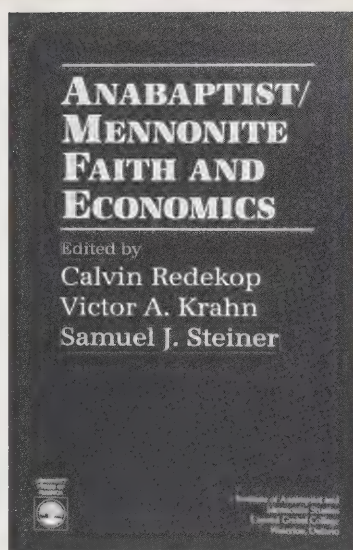
Anabaptist/Mennonite Faith and Economics, edited by Calvin Redekop, Victor A. Krahn, and Samuel J. Steiner. Institute of Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies, Conrad Grebel College, 1994. 425 pages, \$33.00, paperback.

Reviewed by James L. Rosenberger

This book considers in depth the Anabaptist/Mennonite understanding of economics through a collection of papers presented at a conference held at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario, May 24-29, 1990. The introduction sets the stage for a serious study of "faith and economics." Though often kept in separate spheres, this book reveals, throughout the history of the church, a close link between its faith and economic expression.

Each chapter tackles a separate issue of historical interest. The first part gives historical theological perspectives with essays about Anabaptists from four different regions—the Swiss, Dutch, Russian, and French. Early writings condemned unbounded capitalist competition, but encouraged full participation in the economic system, including pursuit of profits and earnings, which permits the sharing of goods with the poor. However, practices which produce profits at the expense of other persons, depriving fair wages or profits from others, were condemned.

Part two gives examples of tradition and emerging institutions. Chapter 5 provides insight into the uneasy tension caused by the social injustice of economic life and the lineage of mutual aid—"the prosperous individual was expected to adopt the stature of 'steward of the broader community.'" The collapse of the communal group, Rhodenbruderhof, during the Third Reich in a dispute over the ethics of their bankruptcy, gives insight into the ethical values of the Anabaptists. Eberhard and Emmy Arnold's role in forming this economic community and later linking with Hutterites provides an interesting study of the checkered history of the Anabaptists. This story describes vividly the *Tod/Not/Brot* paradigm of Anabaptist history, which progresses from persecution (*Tod*) to loss of security and need (*Not*) and finally to expression of the work ethic and prosperity (*Brot*). The remaining chapters document, in detail, Mennonite economic life in Canada and Paraguay.



Part three examines several dynamics of Mennonite historical life, land settlement schemes, women's work, mutual aid, faith and economic status, and the Mennonite relationship to the larger culture.

Part four concludes the book with five chapters. These analyze our economic relationships in an unjust world, describe the impact which the individualism of market capitalism had on the church community, and interpret the cultural evolution as economic development progressed. Finally J. Lawrence Burkholder describes the problem facing Mennonites today—the dilemma of economic success and Jesus' teachings. Calvin Redekop concludes with a biographical essay, highlighting the source material from which these essays spring and presenting his view that too little attention has been paid to these issues.

These essays form a collective view of how the worldwide Mennonite community has expressed itself economically through the centuries. Mennonites in Canada, Germany, Paraguay, Russia, and the United States all experienced different economic pressures on their behavior. Exciting reading for anthropologists, sociologists, indeed, politicians, and leaders who think they can change or steer the future direction of the subculture, or just wish to understand how we arrived at our present beliefs.

James L. Rosenberger is professor of statistics at the Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania.

FQ price—\$29.70
(Regular price—\$33.00)

The Limits of Perfection: A Conversation with J. Lawrence Burkholder, Rodney J. Sawatsky and Scott Holland, Editors. Institute of Anabaptist-Mennonite Studies, 1993. 135 pages, \$10.00.

Reviewed by Reg Toews

"You know we don't go to court, Reg."

"But Dad, I'm doing this to protect a child."

In this conversation with my dad 30 years ago, I was explaining how as a child welfare worker I had come to terms with using the "instruments" of the world in doing my job.

Even now I find J. Lawrence's writings most helpful in exploring how one lives at the junction between "Mennonite radical idealism and reality."

While the book is effectively presented as a conversation, including eight scholarly responses, the section on Burkholder's autobiographical reflections is particularly powerful.

This format also highlights his approach to ethical issues as a practitioner rather than as an academic.

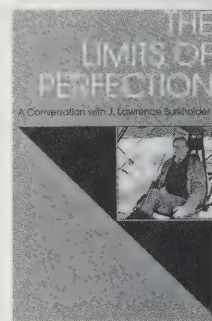
Burkholder, while loving the Mennonite church, challenges its historic teachings on social ethics. As an example, by reflecting on the simple generosity of his mother in contrast to the complexity of his life as a relief administrator, he concludes of agape love that "collective life, could not be run by agape," but that at best, agape "punctuates, but does not constitute, organized life."

Similarly, with openness and honesty he grapples with such issues as power, compromise, ambiguity, and private vs. public responsibility.

If you are interested in an honest examination of the challenges in applying historic Anabaptist teachings in the area of Mennonite social responsibility, read this book.

Reg Toews is Assistant Deputy Minister, Manitoba Health, Province of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

FQ price—\$9.00
(Regular price—\$10.00)



Prayers of an Omega: Facing the Transitions of Aging, Katie Funk Wiebe. Herald Press, 1994. 112 pages, \$6.95.

Reviewed by Terri Plank Brenneman

Prayers of an Omega is a collection of psalms and prayers from the perspectives of older adults. The prayers confront the painful experiences of aging. Leaving family, home, and belongings. Turning over car keys. Adjusting to a weakened body. Relating to children's hurried lives.

Joy and thankfulness also abound. Fond memories of friends and family. Acknowledgement of God's presence and guidance. Delight in a grandchild's birth. Thanks for simple pleasures in life.

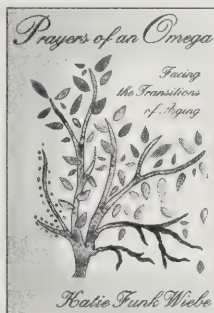
In captivating, humorous, and heart-wrenching style, Wiebe taps the myriad feelings faced in the last stages of life. Authentic expressions of isolation and being overlooked prick the reader's conscience. How easily we get engrossed in everyday events, oblivious to the challenges encountered by our elders.

With a rapidly aging population, the church will increasingly be faced with ministering to the growing needs of older adults. *Prayers of an Omega* will sensitize church leaders and nurture commissions and pastoral care-givers to the spiritual needs of omegas among us. Children of all ages (from 2 to 92) will be touched by the honesty of the psalms and prayers.

Profound faith and trust in God sustaining us to the end of our lives sing through the pages. The hope is clear—God continues to work in us, even in our wizened years.

Terri Plank Brenneman is a clinical psychologist in private practice. She is also President of the Women's Missionary and Service Commission of the Mennonite Church.

FQ price—\$5.56
(Regular price—6.95)



Family Violence: The Compassionate Church Responds, Melissa A. Miller. Herald Press, 1994. 180 pages, \$9.95.

Reviewed by Doris Gascho

The congregation can learn about and respond sensitively to individuals who suffer because of abuse of power within families. We must acknowledge how the theology we teach contributes to family violence. At the same time, the church can be the channel for grace and accountability.

Melissa Miller has a gentle, affirming spirit and an engaging, hopeful style. I was deeply moved in reading this book, in spite of some horrific stories of abuse. Illustrations from Miller's own life keep the reader grounded in reality. Sometimes we do well in our relationships; sometimes we score zero on nurturing and helping. I was struck by how the reader feels nurtured by the language, by the warmth and tenderness of the prayers, by how often the questions seem good for any season.

There is insightful criticism of some scriptural interpretation and such popular Christian authors as Larry Christianson, James Dobson, and Larry Tomczak who advocate "breaking the child's will." Miller contrasts their views with nonviolent approaches such as reasoning, discussion, setting of boundaries, and time out or isolation.

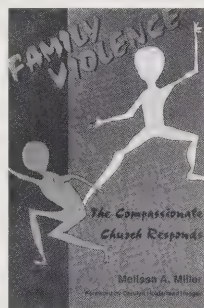
Further, Miller addresses issues such as spousal abuse, disclosure, traps which keep women in abusive relationships, and the meaning of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Concluding with a "how to use this book section," Miller recommends the book to adult Sunday school classes, small groups, elders, deacons, and ministerial fellowships.

This is, indeed, an excellent resource for congregations and individuals.

Doris Gascho is Conference Minister for the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada.

FQ price—\$7.96
(Regular price—9.95)



Old Testament Ethics: A Paradigmatic Approach, Waldemar Janzen. Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994. 236 pages, \$19.99.

Reviewed by Ray Gingerich

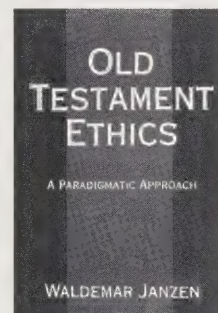
Janzen, Professor of Old Testament at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, wishes "to provide Christians with a model for grasping the Old Testament's ethical message in a comprehensive way"—not reduce its message to the Ten Commandments, to the prophetic calls for justice, or to a theme such as shalom. He seeks to do this by concentrating on "stories modeling the God-pleasing life," organized into composite models or paradigms: the priestly, the wise, the kingly, and the prophetic. A fifth paradigm, "the familial," seeks to incorporate all the others while also transcending them.

Strengths include the development of a "middle level" of ethical imagination between abstractions insufficiently rooted in the fabric of everyday life and an ethic too rigidly based on principles and law. Janzen further insists ethics and theology must be of one whole, reflecting the integration of the ethical life and salvation.

Readers, including myself, who understand the prophetic tradition to be more normative for Jesus and his followers than the tradition of Solomon, will find Janzen's use of "the family" paradigm to have a flattening impact upon the Scriptures, muffling the prophetic voice and resulting in an ethic that inadequately portrays "the God-pleasing life." Others, who seek an understanding of the biblical canon not conditioned by the socio-political backdrop that gave rise to Israel's stories, may find here a very practical synthesis.

Ray Gingerich is Professor of Theology and Ethics at Eastern Mennonite University.

FQ price—\$15.99
(Regular price—19.99)



Daniel (Believers Church Bible Commentary Vol.6), Paul M. Lederach. Herald Press, 1994. 324 pages, \$17.95.

Reviewed by Helmut Harder

Students of the Scriptures are aware that Daniel has been the subject of a variety of interpretations. Paul Lederach takes an historical approach, allowing Daniel to speak its message on the basis of and in the context of its historical situation.

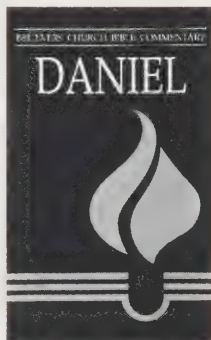
This results in a volume that avoids the problem of undue speculation. Also, we gain access to a wealth of historical information. We find this not only in the ongoing commentary on the biblical text, but also in the essays at the conclusion of the volume. It is evident that Lederach has lived with the text of Daniel for many years.

As though the task of interpreting the prophet Daniel is not sufficient challenge, Lederach further takes on the task of relating the message of Daniel to today's church from a Believers Church perspective. For example, the predominant "sovereignty of God" theme is related effectively to questions of church and state and to suffering. Lederach's educational background shows through in his ability to suggest suitable applications. In particular, the applications establish the place of this volume within a "Believers Church Bible Commentary."

The commentary makes Daniel accessible to students of the Bible and will give preachers the confidence to preach from its pages. The volume could have been improved by including maps, pictures, charts, and possibly some artwork.

Helmut Harder is General Secretary for the Conference of Mennonites in Canada.

FQ price—\$14.36
(Regular price—17.95)



Why Didn't I Just Raise Radishes?, Melodie M. Davis. Herald Press, 1994. 166 pages, \$7.95.

Reviewed by Ann Weber Becker

If the title of Melodie M. Davis' latest book (*Why Didn't I Just Raise Radishes?*) piques your curiosity enough to pick it up, then the subtitle (*Finding God in the Everyday*) promises what awaits inside it. It is a collection of 50 short meditations drawn from Davis' newspaper column, "Another Way," which appears in more than 15 papers.

Each three-page meditation is rooted in the kind of everyday experience that will feel familiar to most readers. Whether hunting for the elusive library book, serving on a committee, or coping with a family's morning rush, each meditation assumes God is present and proceeds to explore how. A biblical reference appears at the end of each chapter as a "verse for reflection." Parents with young children especially will find much encouragement here.

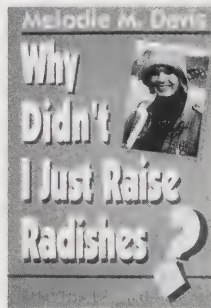
One soon senses a consistent shape and rhythm to the meditations. An experience is explored up close, set in a larger context, and brought to some resolution.

The collection's strength might also be its weakness. It is possible to tire of neat resolutions to life's questions and issues. There is plenty of pain, plenty of joy, that cannot be explored and resolved in three pages. I think Davis knows that, so the book has an integrity within the chosen form.

Find in this book a gentle, reassuring companion for the journey through the everyday.

Ann Weber Becker is a homemaker and pastor in Kitchener, Ontario.

FQ price—\$6.36
(Regular price—7.95)



Storytime Jamboree, Peter J. Dyck. Herald Press, 1994. 184 pages, \$6.95.

Reviewed by Marilyn McKinley Parrish

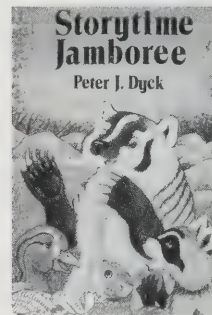
Storytime Jamboree is a delightful collection of animal tales which are based on biblical stories. Once in a faraway country, good friends Badger and Beaver got together at an animal conference and began to share stories. This evolved into a three-day "Storytime Jamboree." Animals came to dance, play, swim, eat, visit, and share stories about their families. Telling stories was a way for the animals to remember how the Great Spirit was at work in their own past. This understanding of their past helped them to pass on a strong identity to their children. Three rules of story-telling guided the participants at this jamboree; stories had to be true, teach a lesson, and above all be interesting.

Stories were told during morning, afternoon, and evening sessions, and at bedtime each day. We meet many animal characters, and, at the end of each well-told story, the reader is encouraged to compare it with the biblical story on which it is based. Drawings by Sherry Neidigh illustrate the text.

In his fourth book for children, Peter Dyck follows the guidelines of his animal friends well. He tells each story with wit and insight.

Marilyn McKinley Parrish is a research librarian. She lives in East Petersburg, Pennsylvania, with her husband and two children.

FQ price—\$5.56
(Regular price—6.95)



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Composting, Religion, and Energy

by Kenton K. Brubaker

My colleague, David Alleman, holds that composting should be included in the new Mennonite Confession of Faith. The careful and deliberate recycling of organic waste speaks of reverence for the earth and its God-created natural cycles. Composting is a visible protest against the myth of a "giant hole" where all garbage goes, never to be seen again. It is anti-landfill.

When we contemplate the inordinate expense that goes into stimulating grass growth with fertilizer and water, followed by massive efforts to control that growth by whirling blades, and then hauling it away to rot in some forgotten field, it

compost I have dug into my experimental plots in the Eastern Mennonite University Arboretum have colored the soils a deep brown and greatly improved the structure, water-holding capacity, and fertility of these gardens. This compost was made from the grass and leaves from the rest of the campus and the surrounding community, then hauled to the compost site by trucks and tractors, often after being sucked up by giant sweepers.

Currently we have several little mountains of leaves donated by the city after sweeping our local community. The actual composting process has been relatively energy efficient;

What is it
about tall grass and fallen leaves
that stimulates this
great suburban housecleaning?
Why must lawns
look like shaved carpets?

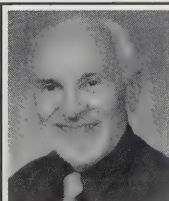
begins to look like a human habit which ought to be reexamined. All of these frenzied activities require large commitments of energy, most of them in the form of fossil fuel. Furthermore, tons of nutrients are being raped from their mother's root zones, preventing the natural recycling of nourishing minerals.

What is it about tall grass and fallen leaves that stimulates this great suburban housecleaning? Why must lawns look like shaved carpets, and what is so untidy about leaves spread about upon the ground? Surely nature does not insult us when we walk in the woods in the autumn or through wildflower meadows in the summer. Some of our greatest moments of peace and inspiration occur in these settings.

Nature runs an automatic composting process. That is why we find dark, rich soils on many of our native grasslands and forests. The tons of

one turning of the pile at the end of the first year by a front-end loader. We have been very patient about the decay process. Why rush disintegration? It will happen eventually.

David pursues his composting more vigorously, perhaps even religiously. By careful and frequent turning, watering, and perhaps some smelling compost in just a few weeks. He has been known to bring the product of his art to church on talent night. His love of decay is wonderful. May we all strive to be more like him, this modern saint of composting.



Kenton K. Brubaker is professor of biology at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

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• The Mennonite Publishing House invited a group of Mennonite artists to create works of art to illustrate the Adult Bible Study Guide, Winter 1996-97. The works, which the artists are currently completing, will become part of a 13-piece exhibit available as a traveling exhibition. **David Hiebert**, guide editor, commissioned **Esther Augsburg**, **Katherine Bartel**, **Chad Friesen**, **Sibyl Graber Gerig**, **Merrill Krabill**, **Jerry Lapp**, **Darvin Luginbuhl**, **Gregg Luginbuhl**, **Merrill R. Miller**, **Teresa Pankratz**, **Cheryl Pannabecker**, **Mahlon Schmucker**, and **Herb Weaver** to portray in their styles and media the 13 New Testament personalities which will be studied in the Winter 1996-97 quarter.

• The Trenton, Ohio Historical Society has begun an Augspurger Restoration Fund. They hope to restore "Chrisholm," homestead of **Christian Augspurger** (1782-1848), the leader of six Amish families who settled in Butler County, Ohio in 1819. The current farmhouse was built in 1874 by Augspurger's son

Samuel on the original 1819 foundation.

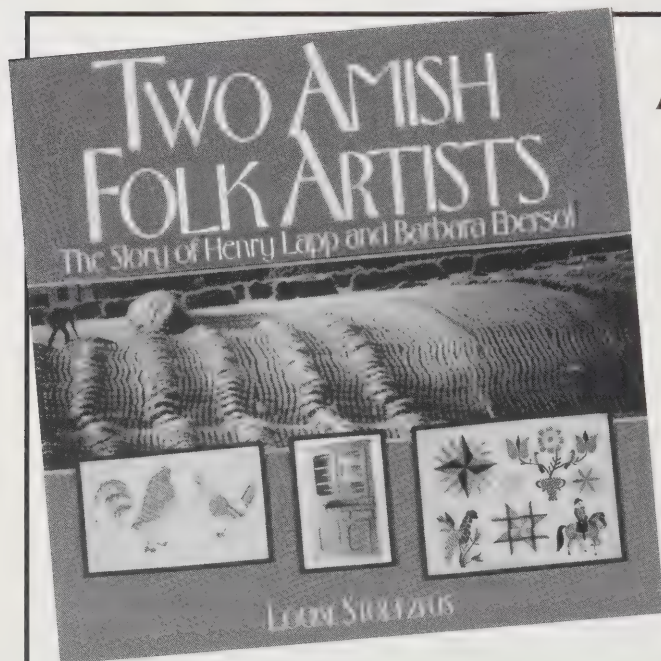
• **The Woldemar Neufeld Collection**—over 300 works of art cooperatively maintained by the Neufeld family, the City of Waterloo, Ontario, and Wilfrid Laurier University—is currently being exhibited at Castle Kilbride in Baden, Ontario. Called "**A Celebration of Regional History: An Exhibition of Artwork by Woldemar Neufeld**," the collection opened November 1, 1994 and continues through August 31, 1995. An area landmark, the Castle Kilbride houses the administrative offices for the Township of Wilmot. Open Monday to Sunday, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

• *Closer Than They Appear* is a self-produced audiocassette of the **Mennonite Distorter Band**. Associated with the humorous periodical *The Mennonite Distorter*, the band challenges traditions in its eclectic mix of music. From irreverent satire in such songs as "The Ballad of Willie Reimer," where playing the Mennonite game goes out of control,

to serious protest songs such as "Roki's Dream," the story of a martyred Sarajevan schoolboy, the group presents a diverse package of music. Available from P.O. Box 27041, Winnipeg, MB R3C 3Z0.

• Four Mennonite-related artists under age 35 comprised a panel which addressed "Growing Up at the End of a Century" at The People's Place Gallery's annual art weekend, **Art '94**, held November 18 and 19, 1994. Each year the gathering brings together artists for a time of sharing and reflection. **Douglas Witmer**, the Gallery's assistant director, chaired the panel. Three of his peers—**Kristin Diener**, Somerville, Massachusetts, **Renny Magill**, Talmage, Pennsylvania, and **Tim Dyck**, Plainsboro, New Jersey—joined him in discussing how their lives as artists are influenced and affected by the Mennonite world at the end of the 20th century. The weekend also featured **Herb Weaver**, Bethany, West Virginia, as keynote speaker.

• **Harold Moyer**, North Newton, Kansas, recently set to music five



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A Remarkable, Engaging Story

Two Amish Folk Artists by Louise Stoltzfus

Lapp and Ebersol are considered by most authorities to be the leading Amish folk artists of the 19th century. Both were artists. Both were single. Both had physical disabilities. They were born and raised on turn-of-the-century neighboring farms in the Mill Creek Valley of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

Henry Lapp (1862-1904) built simple, yet beautiful, pieces of furniture and painted exquisite watercolors. Barbara Ebersol (1846-1922) spent most of her life working as a seamstress in the homes of her Amish community and creating carefully designed fraktur (hand-decorated and painted) bookplates and paintings. National museums have recognized both.

Here is the charming story of their lives. Numerous anecdotes and tales which still float through the Amish community about Henry Lapp and Barbara Ebersol appear. Illustrated with many surviving examples of their delightful work.

8 x 8 • 119 pages • More than 100 color plates • \$19.95, paper

An oil painting which has come to symbolize the grueling exodus of German-speaking refugees from the Soviet Union during World War II has been given to Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario. The artist, **Agatha Schmidt**, was born in 1923 in Gnadenfeld in southern Ukraine. She was one of some 35,000 Mennonites persuaded to leave their homes by the retreating German army. The long and painful flight was captured in Schmidt's painting, *Exodus II*. Now 71, Schmidt lives in Waterloo, Ontario, where she continues to write and paint.



poems by **Jean Janzen**, Fresno, California. Written for mezzo-soprano and piano, *There Are Days* had its premiere performance at a Bethel College convocation on October 24. Janzen was present and read the five pieces—"Pastorale," "Separations," "Mennonite Music," "There Are Days," and "Driving in Fog." The composition was performed by vocalist **Kathryn Kasper** and pianist **Karen Schlabaugh**. *There*

Are Days was also presented at a voice recital open to the public on Sunday, October 30.

• "**Visual Arts: Wichita '95**" is the title of a juried exhibition of works of art to be displayed during the joint conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite

Church in Wichita, Kansas, July 25-30, 1995. Open to all artists 18 years or older, who have a connection to the Anabaptist faith traditions, "Visual Arts: Wichita '95" will be on view at the Century II Convention Center July 2-30, 1995. For more information contact the Bethel College Art Department, North Newton, Kansas.

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Send inquires, resumes and references to:

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View from the Crown

by James and Jeanette Krabill

August 17, 1994. The Krabill family returns to Africa. After six short weeks stateside. Traveling Swissair. Via Europe. With a twenty-hour lay-over in Zurich.

We touch down in Zurich early afternoon. Hop a train from the airport to Old Town. And check in at The Crown. "An economy hotel, complete with every comfort and a delightful view over the Limmat River. At The Crown," boasts the brochure, "our guest is King."

King for a day in Zurich, Switzerland! Apparently, an appealing idea to many tourists. A little disconcerting, though, to these twentieth-century Anabaptists. What doesn't feel quite right here?

Oh, lighten up, we tell ourselves. You're on a layover, for pity's sake! Layovers are not meant to be taken seriously. Mere midpoints between two other points more interesting. You can forget who you are and from where you've come for just one night. This is your twentieth wedding anniversary. And the summer schedule has been a killer. You deserve this break today. Disengage! Enjoy!

Three floors above the hotel lobby we dump our baggage on the bed and glance around the room. The brochure hadn't lied. We would have a pleasant stay. Telephone. Radio. Mini Bar. Convenient showers down the hall.

And the view! What an *Aussicht* indeed! From three stories up we have before us the best of downtown Zurich—Switzerland's largest urban center, and, perhaps, the wealthiest in the world. Full bloom in late summer splendor. Glistening clean from an unexpected cloudburst.

And there, running through the heart of it all, is the Limmat. Surging forward peacefully beneath our gaze. A silent, enduring witness to former times and temperaments in this modern city "with a heart for change."

The tourist leaflet beside our bed reminds us just how much Zurich has to offer.

Shopping. Museums. Parks. Zoos. Theater. Cinema. All just around the corner from The Crown.

We disengage. We decide to enjoy. And then, much later, as evening shadows creep quietly over the city, we take a stroll. Past the Grossmun-

Here
by the Limmat—
beneath our window
at The Crown—
Blaurock was
"beaten with a rod
until blood flowed."

ster where Master Zwingli's dynamic preaching first pierced young Grebel's heart. On through narrow streets near the Mantz residence where God's Spirit moved "the brethren" to baptize anew. Finally back again to the banks of the Limmat where "Strong George" Blaurock issued threats against the city of Zurich. And promptly incurred its wrath.

Here by the Limmat—beneath our window at The Crown—Blaurock was "beaten with a rod until blood flowed." Here, too, Mantz was "drowned without mercy and thus brought from life to death." And now,

here, too, stand we. Nearly five centuries later. Feeling strangely at home. In this place between other places suddenly less interesting.

Two weeks ago our daughter Elisabeth was baptized into God's family. Upon confession of faith. Her own. "I would like to be baptized," she said, "because I want to follow Jesus, become one of his children, and do what he wants me to do."

Conrad, Felix, and Strong George would have been thrilled. Though perhaps less than fully convinced. "True Christian believers," wrote Grebel in 1523, "must be baptized in trepidation and distress, tribulation, persecution, and death."

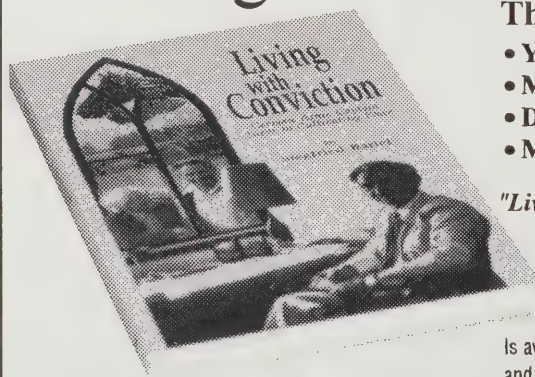
What does Elisabeth really understand about baptism, we wonder? What do we understand? Not much, it seems. Here on the Limmat riverbank.

Words from an early Anabaptist hymn come to mind, strengthening our spirits as we head back to The Crown. "Fortify mightily our faith, O Lord. Preserve us, that we might receive in your Kingdom...the crown of the faithful. Give us, Lord, strength to the end."



James and Jeanette Krabill live with their three children, Matthew, Elisabeth, and Marie-Laure in Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

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Before Sunrise—Low key but charmingly engaging. A young American boy's meeting a French girl on a train becomes a rare encounter of soulmates. Funny and sweet. (6)

Boys on the Side—A mixed-bag movie, overloaded with trendy themes (female bonding, men are bullies, AIDS, an unfulfilled lesbian). Three women on the road, but their wandering lacks focus. (4)

Bye Bye, Love—A step above sitcom, this mild comedy charts the aches and ironies of three regular guys, all divorced fathers, who struggle through a weekend of custody of their children. (6)

Clerks—High energy, low quality, coarse-talking flick about some foul-mouthed guys who work at a convenience store in Jersey. Irritating coarseness overwhelms occasional humor. (2)

Colonel Chabert—A gentle tragedy about a war hero who shows up in 1817 Paris, ten years after he has been declared dead. His wife has remarried and claimed his estate. Fine acting and superb storytelling. (7)

Disclosure—A slick, taut tease of a thriller. Brass knuckles in the work place. A high-tech executive loses his promotion to an old girl friend. It gets complicated as both accuse the other of sexual harassment. Frank but ambiguous. (5)

Dolores Claiborne—A riveting psychological thriller about a daughter who returns to her lonely Maine home to "visit" her mother, a crusty, tough woman accused of murder. Not as grisly as it sounds. Superb writing and acting. (7)

Don Juan de Marco—Sure, it's a fantasy of sorts, but it's clever and fun. Marlon Brando hands in a fine performance as a psychiatrist totally absorbed by the story of his young patient who is (or thinks he is) the legendary lover. Johnny Depp is superb. (7)

Heavenly Creatures—A highly imaginative re-creation of a true-life sensational murder in New Zealand in the '50s. Artful dissection of the vivid fantasies, intense friendship, and murderous attitudes of the two girls. (6)

Hideaway—A man is brought back to life after having been dead too long. A mediocre science-fiction thriller about a psychic connection to a killer. (3)

The Hunted—C-grade yarn about an American businessman in Japan who gets caught in ferocious ninja crossfire. (1)

I Like It Like That—A moving portrait of a Latino woman, caught in poverty, a troubled marriage, and Bronx noise. Vibrant tone transcends usual clichés. (7)

Immortal Beloved—A flawed but partly successful attempt to look into the mind of

the great composer Beethoven. Wild goose chase to locate his mystery lover seems like a side street, but there are unforgettable moments. (5)

I.Q.—Stilted but funny story about several retired scientific geniuses (including Einstein played by Walter Matthau) who experiment at maneuvering such unscientific things as romance. Quite charming. (6)

Just Cause—Watch out. This film begins innocently enough as a story about capital punishment and the miscarriage of justice. But it becomes a high-voltage thriller. Fine acting by Sean Connery and Lawrence Fishburne. (6)

Ladybird, Ladybird—An empathic study of the breakdown of the British welfare system. The mother is not without fault, but the system keeps taking her children away from her. Hard to forget. (7)

The Last Seduction—A sensuous, gritty thriller about a clever woman who lays traps for men. This tramp is good, but her lying is running up a tab. Fast paced and witty. (6)

Legends of the Fall—A would-be saga set in the Montana Rockies in the early 20th century. Three brothers and their widowed father fight each other and court the beautiful woman who arrives from Boston. Too stagey for belief, but visually inviting. (4)

Little Women—A first-rate classic. Wonderful masterpiece about four New England daughters and their mother surviving hard times. Based on Louisa May Alcott's classic novel. (9)

Losing Isaiah—A heart tugger. A black crack mom abandons her baby in a garbage can. A caring white social worker adopts the baby. But the biological mother repents, goes clean—and wants her Isaiah back. Well acted. (7)

The Madness of King George—A delicious treat about leadership and madness. This historical re-creation of the life of the king who lost the American colonies juxtaposes a witty, ebullient king with a dotty, declining monarch. Brilliant acting. Crisp poetry. (8)

Milk Money—Wasted energy. An innocent enough yarn about a 12-year-old boy who tries to find a mate for his widowed dad and inadvertently chooses a kind hooker. (1)

Muriel's Wedding—An offbeat Australian comedy about a young woman from a definitely dysfunctional family who hopes to get married by trying on wedding dresses. Funny and poignant by spells. (6)

Nell—A highly engaging story about a "wild child" from Appalachian isolation who's never encountered modern civilization. Visually stunning. Two doctors

disagree about how to treat Nell after her mother dies. (7)

Nobody's Fool—A nearly perfect "small picture." Paul Newman's finely-tuned, subtle rendition of Sully, a small-town, broken-down contractor who's mostly out of work, is marvelous to watch. Sully's long-estranged son returns with Sully's grandson, and responsibility beckons the great avoider. Deeply emotive slice of life. Excellent. (9)

Outbreak—Hang on to your hat! Dustin Hoffman plays the military scientist in this fast-paced action film about a virus which can wipe out the entire U.S. population in several days. Very much fun. (7)

Queen Margot—A lavish costume drama set in 16th century France. Epic saga of war, greed, lust, and betrayal (and love?) in the struggle between the Catholics and the Huguenots. Passionate magnificence seldom seen in films anymore. (7)

The Quick and the Dead—An old-style western with the modern twist of the mystery gunshooter in town being a woman with an unknown past. Has its moments. (4)

Ready to Wear—Robert Altman brings his quick cuts and ironic critique to Paris and the fashion industry's shallow exploitation. Only this time it's a bore, perhaps because he fails to find his discipline and metaphor. Passing fad. (3)

Red—An intricate, scrumptious puzzle of a movie which ends up tasting more like a smorgasbord than a feast. Very entertaining tale about the oblique relationship between a young woman and an old retired judge who meet by accident. (7)

The Shawshank Redemption—A splendidly acted masterpiece about two men in jail for life and the freedom they discover which eluded them before they came. (8)

Speechless—Two speech writers from opposing political campaigns fall for each other. The movie falls flat. (3)

To Live—A very involving Chinese film, following a couple and their family from the '40s to the '70s, with all of the cultural and political changes. A warm but startling story. (7)

Tom and Viv—A dark, brooding portrait of T. S. Eliot and his difficult relationship with his first wife. Understated, at times almost stony, and yet poetically knitted. (6)

Tommy Boy—A buffoon of a movie. An overwrought comedy about a not-so-bright son who suddenly must save the family business. (2)

Films are rated from an adult FQ perspective on a scale from 1 (pathetic) through 9 (extraordinary), based on their sensitivity, integrity, and technique.

A Menno by Any Other Name Is Just As Sweet

by Katie Funk Wiebe

Peter, the son of Jean Janzen of Fresno, California, has two friends with the name Michael—Michael Swartzendruber and Michael Guenther. On meeting the first Michael, Jean asked if he knew what his name meant. "No," he replied.

"It means black grapes," Jean said. "Come for dinner on Sunday and we'll have black grapes for dessert."

Both Michaels were invited for Sunday dinner, and, while eating the black grapes, they discussed the meaning of Swartzendruber.

The other Michael turned to Jean and asked, "Do you know what Guenther means?"

"No," she replied. She was stumped on that one.

"It means angel food cake with whipped cream and strawberries!" he replied.

• • •

A non-ethnic Mennonite, Kathy Middleton Raphael was always frustrated when new acquaintances would play "the Mennonite game" with her and become perplexed by her non-Mennonite sounding name. Finally, she began introducing herself as "Kathy Middleton—no, it's not a Mennonite name." Her hurt feelings disappeared one day when, after meeting the late John Kauffman of Atglen, Pennsylvania, he responded with, "Now it is!" She felt as if her soul had just received a hug!

• • •

Henry Gerbrandt of Winnipeg performed a most unusual wedding during the years when he was pastoring the Altona Bergthaler Church. The groom

was from the Altona Bergthaler Church, but the bride had grown up in the conservative Old Colony Church, where brides traditionally wear black. She had already transferred her membership to his congregation.

Dressed in white, she entered the church, carrying a bouquet of red roses with her long white bridal veil trailing behind her. She was halfway down the aisle when her mother saw her and uttered a loud, shrill, penetrating scream. The bride's father tried to shush her but couldn't, so he took her in his arms and carried her out of the church, still screaming.

The wedding continued, followed by a lunch. The bridal couple had just begun to eat when a message came for the bride, "Come home immediately. Your mother is dying." The bride remained unperturbed. "Mother isn't dying. She's only pretending." Finally, Gerbrandt and others persuaded her to go home.

Although the mother was lying down, Gerbrandt felt her pulse and discovered a healthy heartbeat. When the bride arrived, Gerbrandt asked her, "Didn't your mother know you would be dressed in white?"

"You cannot discuss things with Mother," she said. Though upset, she agreed to see her mother.

Then came the climax. Her mother looked at her, and, in a clear, controlled voice, said, "You have committed my sin today. All my life I have fantasized about being married in a white dress. But I resisted the temptation. You did not resist and have now committed my sin." But mother and daughter began to talk.

Later it hit Gerbrandt that, in the confusion, the couple had not been legally married, not having signed the necessary documents. They were, however, already on their way into the United States for their honeymoon. He chased after them, gathered witnesses, and had all the papers signed. And a legally married couple crossed the border.

—Henry J. Gerbrandt, En Route



Katie Funk Wiebe, author of many books and articles, is a freelance writer living in Wichita, Kansas.

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Even Prisoners Must Have Hope

by Richard Stratton

I did eight years in federal prison for smuggling marijuana. I was punished, I was demeaned and I was scared. I waded through sewage backed up from toilets. I lived in overcrowded cells. I saw men brutally beaten. It could have been worse: it could have been pointless. I wasn't condemned to idleness. I wasn't denied a place to exercise, a television to watch, an education to embrace. By the time I left prison, I had earned a bachelor's degree, written a novel, mastered enough law to get out early. Now I have a wife, two sons, a job and a message: don't make prisons more miserable than they already are.

of the '80s have given us rampant, desperate inner-city crime and violence in the '90s. If we continue with our vengeful attitude toward criminals (poor minorities, the mentally ill, those who have nothing to lose), the violence will only get worse until there is an all-out war between the haves and the have-nots. Do I overstate? Maybe. For the moment, most violent felons attack people who live near them, who look like them, who share the same social class. Will the crime stay confined? I saw the hate festering in the American gulag all during the '80s. Now I am watching it spill into the streets.

or discontinued other highly effective programs.

To do justice, to break the cycle of violence, to make America safer, prisons need to offer inmates a chance to heal like a human, not merely to heel like a dog. Society is right to expect that prisons will promote respect for the dominant culture and our laws. But how? To paraphrase Malcolm X, a man who has nothing to lose is a dangerous man. Take away what rights prisoners have and no one will be safe—not the guards, not the police, not even the prisoners.

Prisoners, no matter how heinous their crime, have a right to our com-

Prisons
need to offer inmates
a chance to heal like a human,
not merely to heel
like a dog.

For all the lip service once paid to rehabilitation in this country, imprisonment in America is about nothing but punishment, and punishment is the intentional infliction of pain by those in power upon the less powerful. In the United States we equate justice with vengeance; we embrace the theory of "just deserts" for criminals and deviants. Instead of improving the harsh conditions that create crime and violence, which might restore peace and harmony to our society, we inflict more pain, more punishment, thus creating more crime and more violence.

The get-tough-on-crime attitudes

Today's politically motivated campaigns to make prison conditions even harsher are so wrongheaded it scares me—not because I fear the conditions but because I fear the rage and violence that will ricochet back at society. The only prison programs that have consistently been proven to reduce recidivism and temper violence are the education and counseling programs designed to help prisoners make positive changes in their lives. Prisoners who seek out some sort of education while in prison have a very low recidivism rate. Yet we have eliminated Pell grants for prisoners and have cut back

passion and understanding, just as their victims have a right to restitution and to healing, just as society has a right to be protected. Prisoners have a right to hope, they have a right to opportunities that will enable them to change the behavior that led them to crime, and they have a right to re-enter society after they've done their time. Prisoners have a right to become welcome members of society instead of brutalized and brutal outcasts.

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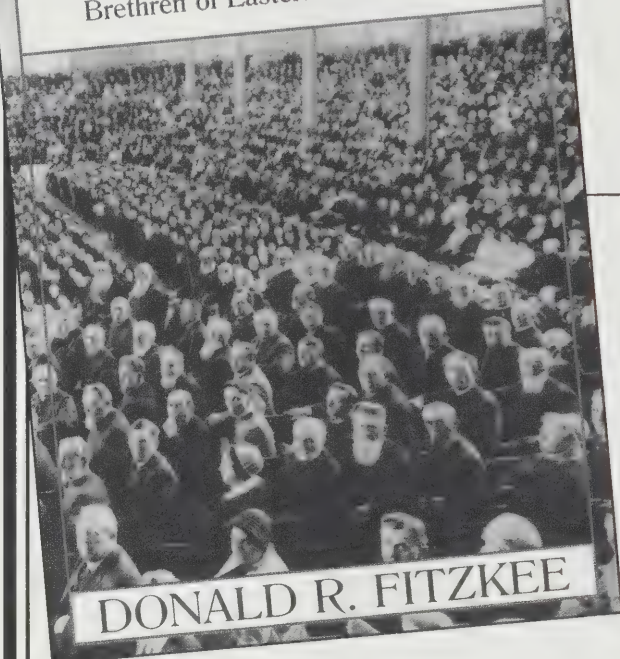


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on the cover . . .

Central American Mennonites search
for a living Anabaptist theology—
one that affirms life, seeks unity,
and practices justice and peace.

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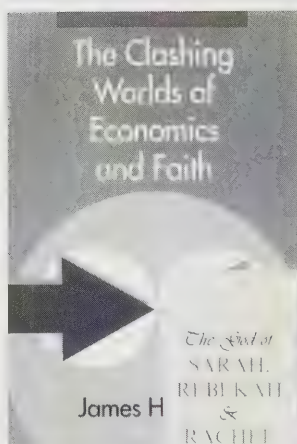
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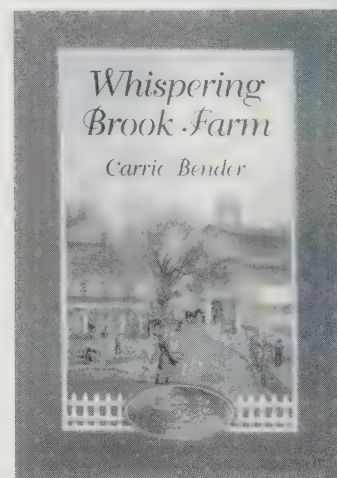
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Phyllis Pellman Good, Merle Good

EDITORIAL

Merger (by a Squeak)

Our readers have long encouraged us to share what's on our minds without mincing words. This is one advantage of being an "unofficial" publication.

1. The G.C.s and the M.C.s are now integrated. By a squeak. The motion passed by a margin of only 6% after 12 years of aggressive lobbying by church leaders.

2. We've been promised the golden age of Mennonite history. We've been promised renewal, savings on budgets, a simpler church structure, an increased witness to the world, and euphoric unity "beyond our wildest dreams" (to quote one of the committee's main presenters at Wichita '95). The drumbeat of promises will now be tested.

3. A question. Was the vote to merge a tacit acknowledgement by church leaders that the two so-called "mainstream" Mennonite denominations may be unable to sustain themselves on their own?

4. The G.C.s and the M.C.s in Canada now have achieved what they've longed for in recent decades—a separate Canadian Mennonite church.

5. The G.C.s in the U.S. seem much more enthused about integration than the M.C.s (it appears that there are about as many M.C.s opposed to integration as there are total G.C.s in the U.S.). However, when the G.C.s discover that they have only one vote of every four in the new U.S. denomination, they may be less pleased.

6. The merger appears to be a move to the left theologically, further polarizing the larger Mennonite family in North America.

7. Everyone should be prepared for a barrage of triumphal rewriting of Mennonite history. This by-a-squeak

vote will be headlined as a tidal wave of God's spirit.

8. Leaders in Mennonite fellowships around the world may want to sort carefully through the propaganda coming out of North America about the merger vote. It remains to be seen whether the merger will result in more unity or disunity.

9. Why was the integration-exploration process so slanted, manipulative, and abusive? The committee and its staff legalistically controlled all presentations, reports, and official seminars. Never once in the six years did the committee organize an open discussion where persons of various views on integration could share on an equal footing. Why? Persons with concerns were reduced to one or two minutes at a microphone after a high-powered promo. And after six years of bulldozer presentations, hard-ball politics, and less-than-candid infomercials (including the embarrassingly high-pressured one on Wednesday afternoon in Wichita), the vote squeaked by with only 6% above the two-thirds majority required. What would the result have been if the process had been less legalistic and more open?

10. My biggest disappointment was in leaders I've respected through the years. Normally they speak up against manipulation and unfairness in church life, but on this issue they caved in, muttering lamely that they guessed the end justified the means.

11. For better or worse, we've been merged. Whether Wichita turns out to be a new beginning or the beginning of the end remains to be seen. One hopes for less manipulation and more inclusiveness in our future. —MG

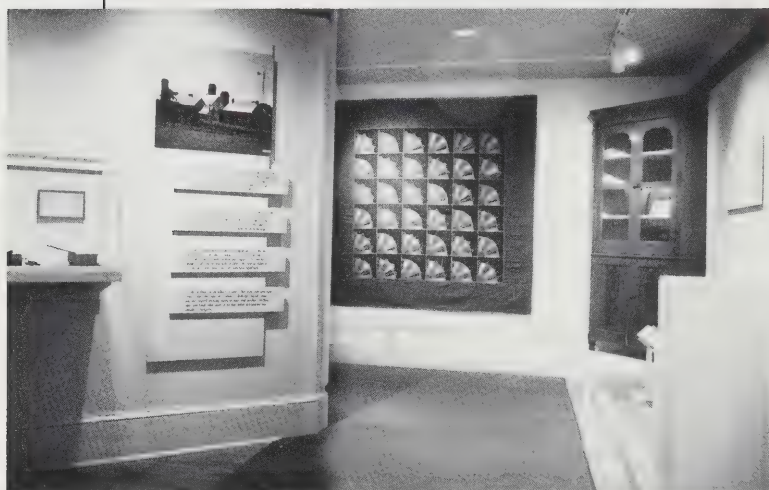
A Personal Note

Phyllis and I have occasionally referred to our two daughters in our editorials. Many of you have been kind enough to ask about them from time to time, especially since the car accident in 1988.

Our older daughter Kate graduated in June from Lancaster Mennonite High School. Phyllis was the commencement speaker. All in all, a special day. —MG



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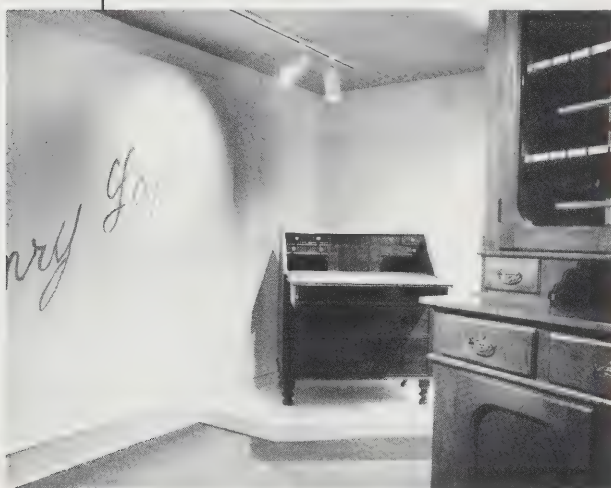
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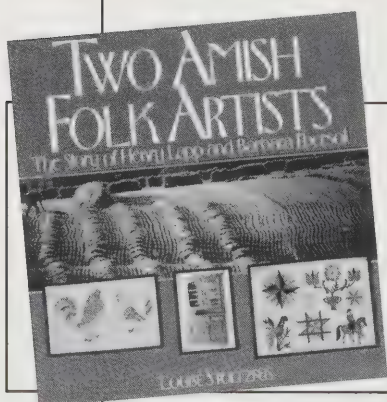
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THE ARTIST

I Wish I Had Known

A TRIBUTE TO MY FATHER

by Eva Beidler

There is often a sense of mystery about who our parents really are. We think we know them, and then something happens that shakes our confidence in what we thought we knew about them.

I always knew my mother was something of an artist. After all, we had grown up with an oil painting which Mother had done, hanging over the old buffet off in the corner of our dining room. It became a familiar fixture in that space; we hardly noticed it except once in awhile when a visitor would ask about it. It was nothing grand, but it was a reasonably good depiction of deer grazing in a pastoral setting with a setting sun and a few rocks and birch trees scattered here and there. I seem to remember my mother saying that she wished she could draw deer better and she'd like to find someone to give her lessons. There were a few artists around, but either they were too busy or she was too busy to give it much more thought. I'm not sure she even asked them.

It was my mother's oils that I found many years later, all dusty and almost dried up, out of reach on top of the china closet. You had to stand on a chair to even see that they were there. Oils—here, all this time. I was amazed with my find. I had been yearning to try my hand at some, and, a little linseed oil later, they were usable. According to my mother, she was using them to paint the deer painting when a number of us children came down with whooping cough, all at the same time.

I always thought that if I "got my talent" from anyone, it was from my mother. It was my dad, however, who came forward one day, late in his life, to claim his share of credit for my becoming an artist.

It was the evening of one of my openings at The

People's Place Gallery. More importantly, it was my parents' very first time attending such an event. Openings usually make me nervous because I feel like I have to go on show, along with my art. But this time, the prospect of my parents being there brought me an additional rush of mixed feelings.

We were eating supper together before the opening when my father began to talk about how he used to paint as a child. At first it sounded like one of his tall tales, but, as he went on, I realized he was quite serious. He explained that when he was a boy, he gave some of his art work to his father to enter in a local competition. (His father was a teacher in a one-room schoolhouse in Franconia, Pennsylvania.) Dad said he never heard what happened to his art work. Then he said something so amazing that I can hear it to this day: "I think I can take some credit for what you are doing."

Never in my wildest dreams had I imagined my dad drawing a picture. Also, Dad was suggesting that he wanted some credit for my art—clearly, I had missed something all those years. I thought he and Mom might in time learn to tolerate my art and accept my becoming an artist. I was afraid to ever hope that they would be proud of me and want to embrace my accomplishments. But for him to claim he had something to do with my talent? No, I never imagined he would say such a thing. My father's statement that evening at the restaurant haunts me even now.

When Dad died several years later, one of his schoolmates came to me at the graveside to confirm Dad's story. This old friend said he used to sit right behind Dad and watch him draw. Dad's peers, he said, admired and respected him for his ability to draw. He



told me that he believes I owe my talent to my father.

How glad I am that my father lived to attend my opening and to reveal that long-held secret. I certainly would have felt great support if he had talked much earlier about his experiences with art. It would have been healing for me to hear him express his wish to be linked to my "talent." What held him back?

I'm sure he didn't realize how much I would have liked to know that part of him. Maybe it wasn't a secret. Could it be that to him it simply did not seem important to talk about? Maybe he didn't have time to dwell on such things until he was slowed down by illness, when he finally had time to review his life. He was attending one of my openings when memories of that child artist emerged. The occasion gave him reason and opportunity to bring up the story.

Perhaps, however, it's a deeper matter; that there were things about art and the pursuit of art which were threatening to him, especially in a conservative church community.

I'll never actually know why Dad kept his art a secret. Maybe it's fruitless to ask questions which can never be answered. But for me, it is important to think about my dad the artist as I continue to deal with his life and death. Part of my continued grieving grows from my sense that Dad made far too many personal sacrifices for the sake of his ministry. He gave up art, which turned out to be a loss for him and for me, since I never got to know my dad the artist.

Some might argue (perhaps even members of my family) that it's silly to mourn for Dad the artist. Dad could never have followed his early artistic interests because he simply had no time left to paint a picture. My parents' times were hard. They had eight children to feed, endless farm chores to do,

Ethel and Stanley Beidler.

Eva Beidler and her parents at The People's Place Gallery opening, the first time they attended an opening of her work.

sermons to preach and meetings to attend. Theirs was an era when you survived by doing what had to be done. Notions about paying attention to yourself, following your own personal interests, or being creative for the sake of self-enrichment—these were ideas not even thought about. My parents belonged to a generation who had little freedom to pick and choose what they did in life. They missed opportunities for higher education; women like my mother weren't free to pursue any vocation they were intrigued by.

In addition, my parents were called to the ministry. My father was ordained by lot in the Mennonite church at the age of 23. Several years later, he became a bishop. My father had only eight years of education, yet he, like many church leaders at that time, was expected to function in the many roles required of a pastor—preacher, counselor, social worker, and administrator. I don't know how Dad did it. The pressure on my parents as a young couple must have been tremendous. My Dad was only in his mid-20s, and they were just beginning their family at the time of his ordination as bishop. One could argue that Dad and Mom were indeed creative and gifted—they managed this situation and went on to give over 40 years of service to the church and the community. That's more than many of us accomplish.

I owe my parents much for their sacrifices. I benefit from their dedication and exemplary service. If my mother and father had chosen another life's path, I would have lost much. But I still mourn what they lost in the process, particularly their artistic or creative freedom. What was the cost of their limited choices? How much have I lost as their daughter because my parents could not or did not know how to attend to their "inner child"?

As an art therapist, I have to ask, would life have been easier for them if they had done more art? Psychology emphasizes the need for self-expression and creative outlets. How much did my parents suffer because they were constrained by the economic times, their ministry, or family? Did they even realize the kind of personal sacrifices they made?

My parents didn't become less creative because of my dad's ordination. The core of one's being does not change because of such a call. Rather, I believe their creative energies had to be diverted away from "self" and rechanneled toward sustaining family and church. Perhaps this is why Dad kept his art a secret. He had no room for the inner artist in his life. He simply had to



squench his urge to paint or draw. It was perhaps this need to control his inner child which helped create an atmosphere within our home which led me to feel that art was a bad influence. It always felt dangerous to me to be artistic. Maybe it felt dangerous to them, too.

The miracle of that conversation at supper the night of my opening was that Dad felt free to be a proud father. He found a way to affirm me—something I needed particularly from him—even though he was telling his own story. He went even further by revealing parts of himself that I didn't know about when he talked about his art being lost and his trust betrayed by his father. In sharing his story, Dad put aside, for me in that moment, his more awesome roles—of father, minister, and bishop—to offer just a glimpse of his creative and vulnerable inner child. His story was a gift to me. Just as wonderful, maybe, I was able to offer a gift to my father, to go ahead and, despite all the odds, be an artist and allow him to take some credit for that.

I just wish Dad could have been an artist, too, in some form or fashion. I wish I could have learned to know that part of my father. If heaven is paved with streets of gold—then maybe for him there are also easels galore and plenty of time and materials to paint to his heart's desire.

Eva Beidler is a watercolor artist and art therapist living in Hyattsville, Maryland.

TED and LEE— On the Hunt for Humor and Authenticity

by Marshall V. King



Photo by Jim Bishop

Ted Swartz and Lee Eshleman don't carry a sign that says "Billions and billions served." But Eshleman likes to joke that, "We've fed more people than McDonalds." The lanky 31-year-old actor is referring to their skit about the Feeding of the 5,000. The skit is part of their current tour, "Fish-Eyes." Swartz and Eshleman, as the disciples Peter and Andrew, tell the gospel story through human eyes, with wonder, doubt, and humor. Only thousands have seen their show, not billions. Nobody receives vittles, but there is food for thought, the soul, and the funny bone.

They are perhaps the only Mennonite comedy duo traveling the country. (Well, they've been in 11 states.) To label them a comedy duo does not tell the whole story. They are actors. They are writers. Ted is a father and husband; a former butcher. Lee is a talented graphic artist and waiter. They are also Mennonites. They are

Christians. They are artists. "We're artists who work in a Christian field and happen to be Christians. We're not Christians who happen to be artists," Swartz says.

From church basements to college chapels, they have cast their nets and tasted the wine from the wedding at Cana. In "Fish-Eyes," they have taken what they consider a good story and looked at it in a different way.

At their performances, you're just as likely to see a woman with a covering as one with a pierced nose. In dozens of performances of the show or pieces of it, Ted and Lee have found that the presentation appeals to people of differing faiths, ages, and backgrounds. More conservative viewers react to the spiritual power of Peter's denial of Christ. Others note the strong writing and acting. "It has value in any context," Swartz says of the show. "It has value just because it's two performers performing their material."

The art happens when they are writing—ad-libbing lines with characters they have developed. But it also happens as they act out the lines on stage. "Good art is one the audience or observer helps shape," Swartz says. They recall the times when Swartz ad-libbed a line and brought the house down after a man snorted. But more important are the times when the audience interacts with them and they feel like they are playing charades in someone's basement. Small shows, sometimes in front of youth groups, often have that feeling. "They're magical. We don't always know why," Swartz says. Those are the times when they feel privileged to be on stage.

Not every performance feels that

way. "You don't fly every night," Eshleman says. But even when they don't fly, they present sketches that took them anywhere from 15 minutes to two days to write. They live out the lines they worked on repeatedly and bring forth the ones that will return laughter.

Partially because of the humor, partially because of the honesty, an electricity, a spirit, runs through their shows. Is it the Holy Spirit? Are they divinely inspired? They won't say. It's impossible for them to separate faith and art, Swartz



Photo by Jim Bishop

says.

It doesn't really matter if they're reading Matthew or watching a James Bond movie, Ted and Lee are likely to find humor. They ask who the building contractor was for the evil villain's stronghold in the Bond movie. Eating with them in restaurants can be dangerous if you blush easily or don't laugh readily. "We have said between us we have more than 50 cumulative years of knowing what's funny," Eshleman

says. "You're born with that set of eyes," he believes, but he didn't fully grab his gift of humor until he was a student at Eastern Mennonite University in the 1980s.

For Swartz, it came even later in life. He cut meat for 12 years and coached basketball and baseball at Christopher Dock High School in Souderton, Pa. Watching Bob Newhart, Monty Python, and a host of other comics, he's always noticed what's funny, but he didn't think of himself as an artist until five years ago.

That was after he and Eshleman had begun working together. In 1987, Swartz was a 30-year-old college sophomore at Eastern Mennonite. When his acting partner for a youth retreat canceled two days before a performance, he was scrambling to find another. He jokingly invited President Joe Lapp the day before the performance. "He declined. Good for him and good for me," Swartz says. But Lapp did take Swartz into the school's print shop and, over the pounding machines, introduced him to Eshleman.

Eshleman agreed to go along, and, to use a cliché, the rest is history. "We had a wonderful time," Swartz says. "We decided we were very much kindred souls in humor and writing." They honed their work together as members of Theatre AKIMBO, which Swartz founded in 1991 with EMU theater professor Barbra Graber Metzler. In 1992, they started touring with 18 sketches called, "The Armadillo Tour."

"Fish-Eyes" began touring in March 1993. Last September they hired an agent, Sheri Hartzler. Giving an average of six to eight performances a month, they're already booked full through this fall and are scheduling shows for the next spring.

Though you'll still see Lee occasionally waiting tables at a restaurant near his home in Rockville, Md., Ted and Lee are now full-time actors. "I want to continue to make it financially feasible so this is what I do. We want to make our passion our vocation," Swartz says.



Photo by Wayne Gehman

This summer, at Wichita '95, they presented reports from various boards or committees in the Mennonite Church. "It was a chance for us to do something for our church," Swartz explains. He says the two used their craft to make the reports interesting. It's not art, but "part of a gift to be able to do something well." Eshleman compares the reports to using a form, like a sonnet, to present information in a different way.

Swartz now has a rule that he won't perform unless he gets paid. The exception is the work he does for his home congregation, Community Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va. He also credits that community of faith as being incredibly supportive and open to his gifts of writing and acting.

To Ted and Lee, craftsmanship, like presenting board reports, isn't degrading. Selling out is something different. Eshleman notes he's heard Swartz say, "He'd rather slit his throat than be dancing around with a Pringles can as if it's the most important thing in the world." They are working on a video, using material from "Fish-

Eyes." You won't see them dancing with potato chip cans. The video is intended for church audiences.

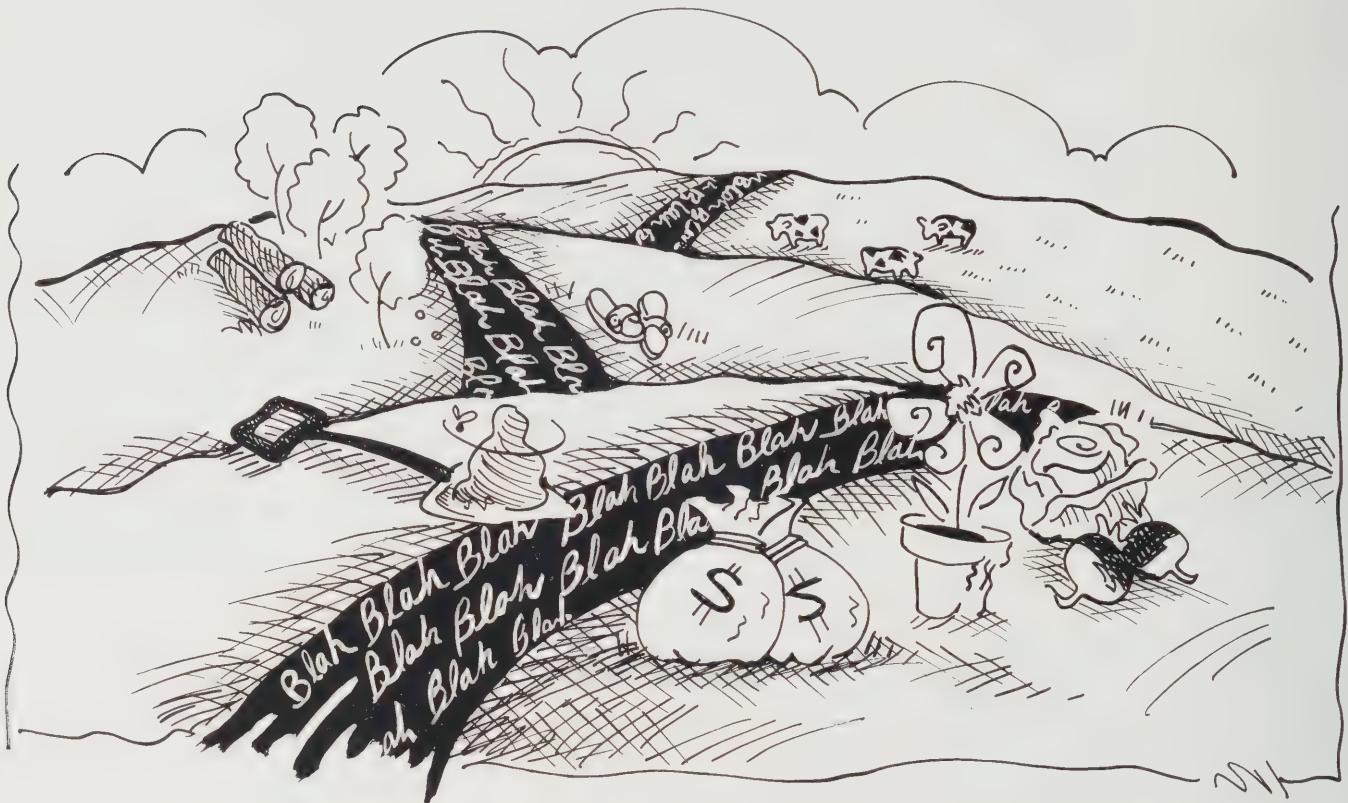
When they have a show to do, they crawl into their 1985 Volkswagen bus, with the set Lee designed, and drive. They call it their magic bus because the odometer doesn't move. It's been stuck on 61,283 miles ever since they bought it two years ago. It's not entirely magic. They do have to put gas in it.

"Someone said we're anointed. I guess that's it," Swartz says. They will write more material and expand their repertoire when the time comes, but they don't have anything specific planned. The anointing may help them then. "I think that we would be anointed, whether or not we were doing 'Fish-Eyes,' if we're making people laugh in a way that doesn't offend you or doesn't put somebody down," Swartz says.

Marshall V. King covers education and agriculture and writes a column for The Elkhart (Indiana) Truth.

INFORMATION BYWAYS

by Keith Helmuth



Artwork by Cheryl Benner

We have been told for some time now by those who “study the future” that we are shifting from a product-based economy to an information-based economy. This forecast has a funny ring to it, a kind of cotton candy quality. When you try to put the intellectual bite on it, it melts away in the mind.

Information economy? What can that mean? The real economy is made up of products like corn and cloth and of services like medicine and music. I know that computerized information systems, triggered by magnetic identification tags, can calibrate and deliver to each cow the amount of dairy ration appropriate to its place in the production cycle, but it is still the milk which feeds the citizens and the economy. Forestry experts use

computers to model and calculate the annual rate of growth for a given tract of woodland, but it is still the lumber and fiber which builds houses and provides paper and fuels the economy.

It is easy to see that more and better information can make for better management in farming and forestry, but it is difficult to see how information can replace products and tangible services as the *basis* of the economy. Perhaps it is especially difficult for a farmer, who has been focused for so long on getting specific products to market, to understand the role of “information” in the creation of value. A few years ago, however, I had an experience which opened my eyes and changed my understanding of the information economy.

When we started our farming

operation, one of the first things I added to the already existing facilities was a greenhouse. While I ran the greenhouse, it was a pretty utilitarian business, dealing in mainline vegetable plants. Then, with a shift in responsibilities, Ellen took over and a transformation occurred. Herbs and flowers, house plants and hanging baskets began to appear. During this time Ellen enrolled in a home-study horticultural program from the University of Guelph, and I built a new bookshelf for her expanding collection of books on plants and greenhouse management. Every year she added something new, and soon our springtime display at the Farm Market was a highly complex array of vegetable, herbal, and ornamental plants.

During the intense days of our

short northern spring, customer demand is heavy, and I join Ellen at the Market stall to help handle the sales. It was during a lull in one such day that I was enlightened about the information economy. For the moment I had no customers, and there were no plants waiting to be carried out to customers' cars. Ellen, however, was in deep discussion with a prospective customer on the care and propagation of several herbs. As I watched and listened I suddenly realized it was not just the plants which brought in the customers but also the information that was enthusiastically imparted when you talked plants with Ellen. Ah ha! I thought; this is the information economy in action. The plants purchased here have a value-added component—information about their care and nurture.

Obviously, there is nothing new about this component in economic transactions. It causes us to buy shoes into which the manufacturer has put intelligent design information about feet. It makes us seek out doctors who thoroughly explain and discuss their diagnosis and course of treatment. People have a preference for organically grown food because of the quality and trustworthiness of the information related to its production. For example, research has clearly shown that crops grown on soils poor in organic activity, but bolstered with chemical fertilizer, may have an incomplete and inferior protein component as compared to crops grown on soils rich with microbial activity. There is vastly more and much better information in a shovelful of compost than in a whole bag of NPK.

Information equals quality, both physically and ethically. We want to know not only if the shoes we are considering have been intelligently designed for the shape and action of feet, but also whether they have been made under conditions of economic oppression where people have been kept poor by the policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. We want to know not only if the food we purchase is untainted by toxins,

but also whether it is transported thousands of miles at great environmental cost.

We don't have to keep up with the latest in micro-processors and modems, cable video and car phones to be where the information is. Information is everywhere. Information is a way of seeing the world, a way of understanding the processes in which we participate and the connections we establish.

The information
superhighway
may provide
a fast lane
to somewhere,
or it may result in
spectacular pile-ups.
You pay your money
and your life and
take your chances.

Lots of hype can be heard these days about the danger of becoming "road kill on the information highway" if we don't put our lives and businesses—including farming—into a fast-forward, electronic mode. Why is this happening? Who is being served by this movement? What will it add up to with regard to ethical development, social responsibility, environmental integrity, health and happiness?

Is it true that our lives and enterprises have been woefully lacking in information which is now brought to our doors by the information superhighway? Not really. Is it true that before the computer, work was not properly done, and with its invention we all heaved a big sigh of relief as it made our work schedules easier? Hardly. The computer has created new and even more demanding forms of work. And what really sticks in my craw is the fact that, contrary to the predictions of those who were "studying the future" thirty years

ago, the computer has vastly increased the consumption of paper.

Electronic communication—the information superhighway—may have a variety of potentials, including better farming, improvements in basic goods and services, environmental protection, social equity, and political accountability. But the real momentum behind it, the motivation for laying out all those fiber-optic and satellite connections is to increase the accumulation of money for those who are smartest and quickest about exploiting the commercial potential of the technology. It looks to me like just another scenario for those who have much, to get even more, and for those who have little, to have even less. This is a rising tide which floats some boats and smashes others on the rocks of competitiveness.

Our greenhouse, which was recently overflowing with plants, is now almost half empty. The season rapidly advances and the information springing up in our gardens and our customers' gardens is demanding more and more attention. The spinach "program" is dazzling in the intensity of its "display," and the johnny-jump-ups have a truly "electric" quality. "Channel by channel" I check out the rows of sprouting crops and then do a little "surfing" over the hay field. In a week or two I must get into some "interactive" firewood cutting and then lay out some "virtual reality" trails in an area we want to open up for better hiking. For supper tonight we will put the "megabyte" on the last of last year's parsnips.

The information superhighway may provide a fast lane to somewhere, or it may result in spectacular pile-ups. You pay your money and your life and take your chances. Meanwhile, I can report there is no lack of information on the backroads and byways. It requires a certain way of seeing, but there is a pattern and an order on which you can rely.

Keith and Ellen Helmuth have developed a smallscale diversified farm in New Brunswick, Canada. Keith writes out of "a background of ecological and social concern."

NEW POEMS *by Jean Janzen*

Recently, poet Jean Janzen was awarded a Creative Writing Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. Her work, which was selected by a panel of major poets, was recently published by Good Books in a collection entitled, Snake in the Parsonage. These poems are from that volume.

IDENTIFYING THE FIRE

Sometimes at night it blooms
in our heads like marigolds
and cockscomb in the cooling garden,

a flare at the end of a long lane
where the ruts finally meet.
Lovers' Lane where my sister and I

carried our dolls, covering
their faces. Lips like fire,
someone said, and we felt a rope

sizzling inside. Our Sunday school teacher
said it was the Holy Ghost hovering,
beating its wings over us

so that every body cell would glow.
All our years a fire consuming,
giving itself away.

We pass it on to our children,
our voices full of love and warnings,
like our own mothers bringing

mustard and tea in the feverish dark,
their hands both soothing and electric.
Even in old age they cradle

a burning as they lean
over pots of geraniums and break off
the stems to help them bloom.

All night the petals scatter
over them, and they stir as though
toward another, someone who once

entered them. A time out of time
kindling the next breath,
and at its far end, branches, gesturing.

SNAKE IN THE PARSONAGE

I found it in the cellar,
sleek and curled around
empty Mason jars when I went down
for pickled beets, cried for my father
to come with a shovel.

This parsonage an ongoing irritation
for my mother, a square white house
in the middle of the barren plain.

All year, a strong wind
driving grit through every crack,
the steep, narrow stairs,
the laundry lines strung
beside the gravel road.

All of it planned wrong, she said,
rinsing the sheets once more.

As if we were reading the Bible
backwards, this four-square manse
set down like the holy city
of Revelation an eternity ago,
reversing its stories of miracle
and its weeping prophets.

And now we were back to the beginning,
one family in a desert
with a serpent, even before
the Garden, when creation
had barely begun. Nothing
on the horizon of this flat land
except the setting sun, evening
after evening, so brilliant
in its fuchsias and golds,
everything waiting to begin.

*From Snake in the Parsonage, poems by Jean Janzen. © 1995.
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A Thank You to Jean Janzen

Julia Kasdorf, a poet living in Brooklyn, New York, offered this tribute at an event honoring Jean Janzen and celebrating the publication of her new volume of poetry, *Snake* in the Parsonage.

Something you must know about Jean Janzen is that she lives in an enormous Tudor-style house in Fresno, California, that was built by a rich man to replicate his ancestral manor in England. (People in

California sometimes do things like that.) If you get welcomed into Jean's house, as many have, the first thing she'll tell you is that she and her husband Louis bought it very cheaply because no one wanted to heat such a big thing. It turns out that Jean and Louis don't want to heat it much either! And this makes their place a perfect retreat for me when I spend Christmas holidays with my husband's family in an overcrowded ranch-style house on the other side of town. That's how I first met Jean. What struck me on that initial visit was that in her huge, elegant home, she'd choose a tiny room off the kitchen for her writing studio.

"It's practically the pantry!" I thought indignantly, still a student in the poetry program at New York University, where we learned that art is *everything*, and you *must* betray your biological family (preferably through the publication of poems) in order to join your *real* family of fellow authors. This Jean Janzen, writing in a pantry, *surely* she must be too bound by her ties to family and church. How could anyone working that close to the stove and the dinner table come up with poems that tell the truth?

It's that *room* that makes her work come out so full of hope and redemption and resolution by the end, I figured. How can she not be furious—this woman who got her MFA only after the children were in school, who belongs to the Mennonite Brethren church (which still refuses to ordain women), who comes from a family torn and dislocated by the violence of the Russian Revolution and its aftermath? Having been educated in an era that frames much of experience in terms of oppression, I figured Jean just wasn't telling it straight. And I think I may have even told her this.

But through the years—as I've read her poems and letters, as we've talked side by side on rocking chairs near the woodburning stove in her kitchen, which sits just outside her studio—I've come to appreciate what she

FQ/Kenneth Pellman



At the event celebrating the publication of *Snake* in the Parsonage—author Julia Kasdorf, poet Jean Janzen, and book editor Phyllis Pellman Good.

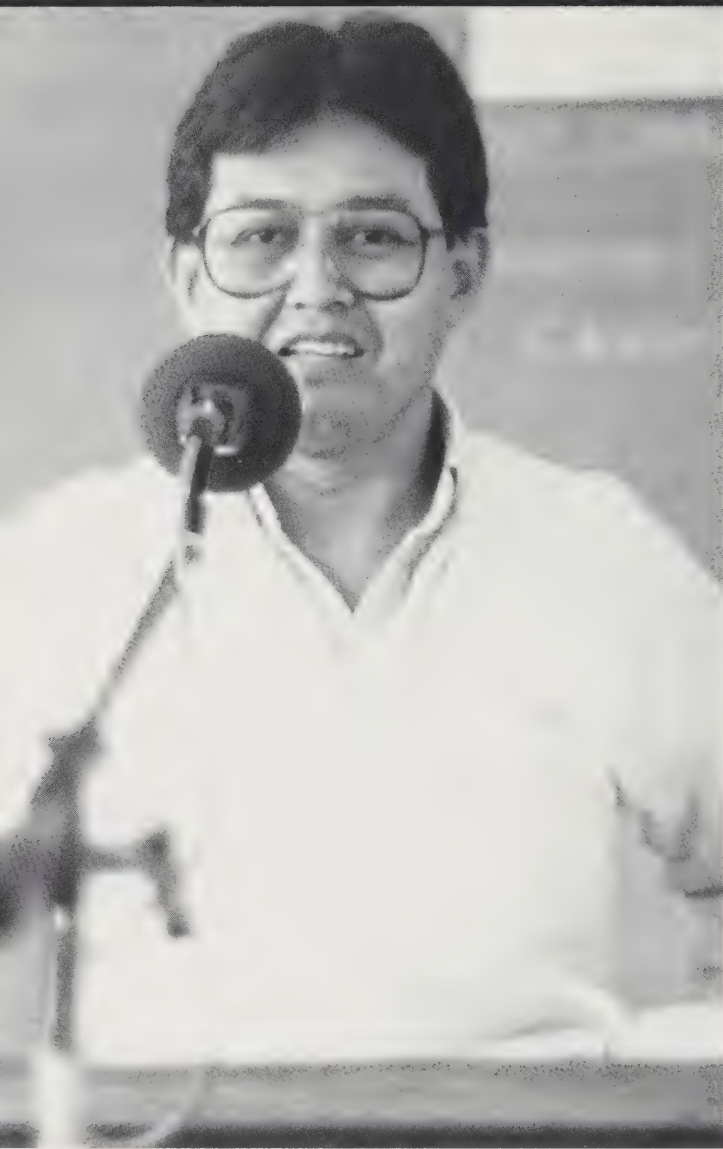
does. Like any artist, Jean writes for herself things as they are. This she does in that little room which is like a hot coal in the great house of her life. And her work ends up bringing warmth and light to the wider world. From an early poem about the silence around her grandmother's suicide in the Soviet Union, which has come to be an emblem of the Russian Mennonite story, to eight hymn texts in a new hymnal, Jean writes what is

true. And also what is useful. She refuses to sever ties with her tradition, even when it offends her. She remains in relationship with a church community, even when it cannot see past the roles in which she was cast for so long—wife, mother, hostess, committee lady. She has managed to make from all of her life, her work.

My mother was shocked to finally meet Jean at a reading not too long ago—"She's close to *my* age," she exclaimed with delight. "You never told me that. The way you talked, I thought she was your age!" Jean's not my age. Her ambition and will to write may match someone in her early 30s; a National Endowment for the Arts award and numerous journal publications recognize her determined accomplishment. But there's more. There is something which I attribute to a mellow body and spirit: Jean's heart knowledge gathered through the years. *This* is what she retrieves in that small pantry and writes into poems, then offers to us, like food.



Face on a grave in an abandoned Mennonite cemetery in Jean Janzen's ancestral Polish village, taken by her husband, Louis.



FQ/Merle Good

Does the “Anabaptist Vision” Fit the Mennonite Churches of Central America?

by Mario Higueros

I speak from a realistic and painful reality, but, at the same time, a reality that is full of hope. This hope is rooted in our biblical heritage that emerges in spite of tears, pain, and injustices. Here are a few ideas about doing theology in Central America.

This theology is done by sisters and brothers who, for the most part, cannot read nor write and whose economic situation obliges them to consume their meager pay before they receive it. This is a theology of the road, temporary in character. It is done in the dusty and dangerous path of life and not from the security of the theological balcony.¹

It is a theology that develops among the workers in agriculture plots and trans-national factories, among the street vendors and the washing-ironing ladies working in strangers' residences.

This theology is not written. It is sung, it is lived, it is suffered daily amid incredible social and economic circumstances. It is a theology taken from daily life and the Bible as a “mirror-hermeneutic” that reflects our pain and anxieties. That's why many in our setting favor a focus on concrete biblical themes such as the Exodus.

The persecuted and tortured Anabaptists described in the preface of *The Martyrs Mirror* are an exact and terrible picture of what many Christians are suffering

today in Guatemala. And yet, today, as in the time of the Anabaptist beginnings, ironically, the joy of faith emerges in the life and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

What does it mean to do theology in a setting of basic survival?

Economic Survival

In most Central American countries, natural resources are simply not found in abundance. The primary interest of both internal and external economic powers has been to exploit our cheap labor. And now Central American people also live under the heavy weight of foreign debts brought on by high interest and usury.² Most of our people are preoccupied with surviving, which is aggravated by worldwide practices that protect First World economic systems, even though many people are dying of hunger.

Political Survival

Physically eliminating people is one practice used to subdue the social dissatisfaction of large sectors of our society. The threat to life is constantly present, not only from the normal dangers in our streets and the military strategies, but by systems that compromise our future and any hope to supersede our dire poverty.³

One strategy that is commonly used is to divide our

peoples. Violence and terror are methods used to maintain power. These tactics reach into all social strata and consequently affect the life of the church. For example, from 1982-1984, one denomination in Guatemala lost 10% of its members due to the military implementing a scorched earth policy.

The economic and political power systems continue to be militaristic and autocratic, following the pattern of a quasi-feudal church-state relationship. Since the 16th century and to our day, this pattern continues. It provides the structures for a careful, official control of all means of production, marketing, and political systems.

Social benefits, as well as secular and theological education, continue to be accessible to only a privileged minority. Education, in general, as well as theology, has always come to our countries from foreign interests and a colonial heritage. So even education contributes to legitimizing oppressive and exploitive policies. Our present educational systems are about a century old; they continue to maintain most of the paternalistic educational philosophy and structures of 19th century liberalism.⁴

Religious Survival

The theologies we have been taught have certainly left their marks. The Reformed—"Evangelistic" variety, primarily from North America, and the traditional European hierarchical, dogmatic Catholic theology both reinforce an educational-theological dependency style that accommodates itself to the status quo. The presence of numerous denominational groups representing "evangelicalism" reinforce a theology that also legitimizes the status quo, including direct and indirect justification of war and violence. Furthermore, they emphasize an individualistic pietism that divorces faith from the realities of life.

Many of the Reformed-evangelical missions taught that the soul was of primary value. They understood their presence and mission to be divorced from peoples' social and political needs, even though the latter were the cause of many of their own members' suffering.

During the '70s a new generation of churches developed from the North. These churches are convinced that political participation is necessary, but from a hermeneutic that equates the will of God with North American government politics—first, as "God's defense against communism and its evil empires," and second, that

realizing the kingdom of God means grasping the "American Dream." These churches occupy themselves not only in "saving souls for Christ," but in enticing already established Christian groups to join their cause against liberation theology, which they understand to be only another ideology undermining sound doctrine.

Mennonite Churches

Most of the Mennonite churches that were founded during the '60s were strongly influenced by various North American evangelical currents. This happened because the theological basis of North American Mennonite missions was greatly influenced by conservative evangelicals in the U.S. and Canada. Other Mennonite churches are the result of alliances with independent leaders and groups that, for one reason or another, adopted the name "Mennonite," as they might just as readily have adopted any other denominational name. In reality, at that time, one could rarely note any significant theological, liturgical, or pastoral differences between Mennonites and other evangelical churches. In fact, many of these church alliances and their principal leaders brought with them a primarily Pentecostal background.

Resistance to Christian Theology

Today there is a widespread resistance to these varieties of Christian theology among Catholics and Protestants and, in fact, among all who confess to follow—or not to follow—Jesus Christ. Yet since the time of Vatican Council II, the Catholic church here in



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Central America has been experiencing a decisive renewal. Here and there "base communities" have emerged in place of private faith. They see serving the world as another way of living the Gospel.

Their communities do not understand themselves as just one more reshaping of the Gospel to the socio-political realm. These Christians do not pretend to supplant the secular world. But they try to illuminate and evaluate their world so the kingdom of God can be realized within that world.

These groups, however, are in the minority in the Catholic church, whose hierarchies continue in Medieval-Age darkness. Even so, these base community groups are surging as a way of being church, and they will not likely join the Protestants. They are the germ of a new church and a new evangelization. Those outside the church will sooner or later be evangelized by sisters and brothers who, more than belonging to a particular confessional group, live out kingdom faith and commitment among the most needy in the world.

Finally, I want to explain that our Christian formation in Central America is taking place in an atmosphere of theological resistance from yet another quarter. This resistance is against a Christianity that frequently allies itself with culturally and socially oppressive systems. I refer to the indigenous faiths which were readily identified as "pagan" by Christians, who then made them the object of their mission.

Christianity is now being rejected by indigenous faiths which had earlier been victimized by the rigid and uncompromising attitudes of Christian missions.

The confrontation itself is a challenge, but, more than that, the vital, living presence of these faiths

causes us to reflect on the authenticity of our own faith. The so-called monopoly of western religion is no longer accepted. Many voices from within and without Christian circles are pushing us to reflect on God as one not limited to a given theological heritage.

The poverty and marginalization of indigenous peoples makes us keenly aware of the inadequacy of a religious Christian faith that is primarily "believed" rather than "lived." What we are also realizing is that those who follow indigenous beliefs have so much to teach us in the areas of worship, faith, and ethics.

How, in the face of all this, can we speak of a God that is good and that provides? How, when presented with all these problems, do we speak of a God of justice and judgment, especially among abused and persecuted people? It is very difficult to speak of the justice of God in the presence of gross injustices. And how much more troublesome for a "First World" Christian to speak of a just God, while the First World's technology and economy support a system that keeps many persons trapped in terrible subhuman conditions.

A Theological Challenge

With this kind of sad panorama as a background in our Guatemalan experience, what is theology?

Theology need not be written to be theology, since intellectualism and rationalism are not elements that determine or qualify theology. Furthermore, how could explicit theology be formed in countries like ours where large sectors of society cannot read or write? So the alternative is to either "import" theologies or to create a theology in harmony with our particular needs and worldview.

Latin American theology (also called liberation theology) places the doing of theology among the tasks of the faith community. First, there is a reflection on experience, and only then is it written. Theology is incarnated in the actual. Many past Anabaptist theologians, as well as some of us today, insist that the essence of theology is its practice. This makes discipleship one of the principle elements of our Anabaptist theology. Latin American theology today calls it "following Christ." The German term *nachfolge*, as I understand it, indicates precisely this.

Little by little we have been finding that the Anabaptists didn't write theology and that their theological writings weren't intended to be systematic. The theology for many of them was more implicit in their lives, rather than explicit in theological formulations.

Christian practice does not come out of a formulation. On the contrary, first comes action and then the word of explanation or definition.



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Fifty years ago Harold Bender identified three characteristics of Anabaptism that helped Christians at that time know who they were, why they were here, and where they were going. Bender presented what society in his time needed in the face of the anxiety it experienced with war: a new ethic that would review human conduct in the face of hate, egoism, and rivalry. He offered a new social horizon that would give humanity a new sense of belonging in the face of uprootedness and alienation, and a new, old Christian practice that would establish the church's mission to be peacemakers in the world.

It is surprising how we in Central America today are living in circumstances very similar to those of the peasants of 16th century Europe. These circumstances force us to theologize in a way that addresses our needs and offers hope. That's why we modern Anabaptists must ask if the making of dogmatic theological formulations is not contradicting much of our own theological inheritance. This questioning process is very serious for training institutions such as SEMILLA (the Latin American Mennonite Seminary) that attempt to teach Anabaptist theology. How can one formulate that which is not "formulate-able"? The rationale for theological exercise makes sense only when it emerges as a reflection on the experience of faith.

How then can we build a body of ideas without simply importing "sound, orthodox Anabaptism?" We need, instead, a body of thought to help us discover our mission and, at the same time, maintain our chosen identity. How can we write the history of the suffering of our people when doctrinal prejudices exist that already define a vision? I suggest the following thoughts resulting from our searching experience in Central America.

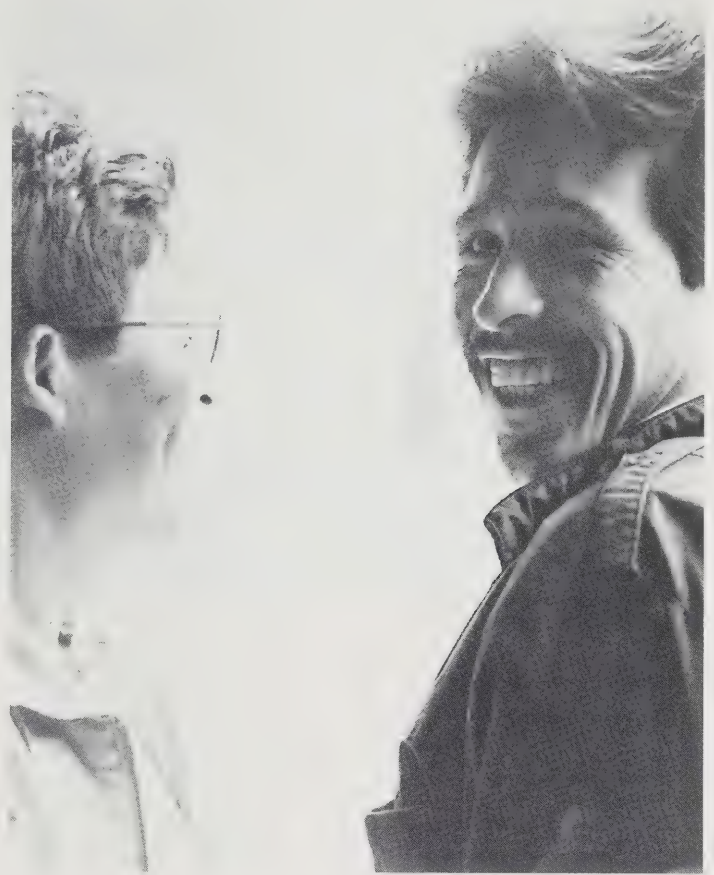
1. A living Anabaptist theology results by affirming life in the constant face of death.
2. A living Anabaptist theology seeks unity in the constant presence of divisions.
3. A living Anabaptist theology practices justice and peace in the constant presence of alienation.

Affirming Life in the Constant Face of Death

Human life and the life around us are the concrete expression of God's project. Threats against life are an insult to the Creator.

Our formative programs must emphasize a theology of creation. In many places the synthetic and the imported are imposed upon us as more valuable than our own products. It is important that we return to the biblical emphasis that gives priority to life. This biblical principle leads us to give priority to the human element instead of to the accumulation of power, goods, and capital. To give priority to humanity leads to having a love for life, whereas excessive emphasis on capital and production only leads to a love for death.

We must try to create a theology that does not indirectly support contaminating and bloodletting systems. Instead, we must cooperate in making Central



America a more just and human place. Today, like never before, the future of the world depends on the creation of a conscience for the preservation of life on our planet.

Practicing a biblical theology of creation means finding ways for men and women to have lives of dignity and to satisfy their basic needs. A Nicaraguan pastor recently told me, "I dread Sunday because more than one member of my church will tell me he has no way to get food for his children. What can I do other than share the little that the church gives to me, their pastor—\$20 a month."

To struggle with people for their life is to be one with the Creator. To favor an economic system, rather than human needs, is to be one with death.

Teaching that is based solely on thematic-doctrinal contents leads to favoring dogmas, creeds, and particular confessions, instead of the life of human beings. To paraphrase the words of Jesus, this type of teaching lives and serves the Sabbath day more than the human persons that live on the Sabbath.

Excessive interest in learning and textual criticism of our theological formation have left to one side the valuable contents of the creation story expressed in the biblical text, especially in the book of Genesis. This leads us to ignore human experience as a valid source for understanding creation. Lay theology, which claims to be nonsystematic and to ignore our educational institutions, has pointed the way back to the core concept of creation with a clear vision of the world and life itself. That's why the people emphasize the practice

of uniting religion with harvest and celebration days.

We have reduced Christology to a system of theological thought, to a kind of catechism, as some "saint to worship." It has been converted to something to believe rather than to be lived. To persist in this is to consent to human control. It results in worshiping our understanding of God rather than God.

Societies with imposed power structures separate daily life from spirituality. Therefore, it is to their advantage to emphasize things to believe rather than examples to imitate.

Our theology should favor a Christology of being disciples of Jesus. This Christology must be developed from below, from the human realm where humans suffer as Jesus suffered.

As Hans Küng says, "Concepts are mute and cannot respond. They are rigid and implacable."⁵ It is very different to pursue discipleship and a following-after of a concrete personality like Jesus, whose adaptability and human transparency make the Christian life possible, and not some fantastic unreachable idea. In this sense, the exclusive practice of systematizing theology reinforces rigidity, intransigency, and the imposing of political systems.

Jesus is the sum of the revelation of God because He incarnates the suffering of the world. This suffering is also seen in creation which foretells that life must first die in the depths of the earth.

Our Anabaptist vision emerges from whole peoples suffering in Central America. In the last 20 years, many have bled at the hands of their own authorities. Pastors, priests, religious workers, and many members of our congregations form a "cloud of witnesses," calling for justice and giving testimony of salvation, just as we're told in Hebrews 11.

We have here a challenge for our congregations and biblical theological institutions—to attain theological

methods and content that lead students of the Bible and theology to follow Jesus, rather than making rambling discourses on theories about Jesus.

Formative programs should emphasize the way toward a participatory ecclesiology.

When Christian churches become exclusive, they forfeit their rich diversity and fall into the trap of becoming alienating gatherings. Too often, a clericalism inhibits community life and we fail to understand pastoral work as a mission of being incarnated into society around us. We need to see ministry as tools for the faith community and the world, and not as aspiring stars for a cause. Our programs should not accept students so they can become pastors, but because they already are. Our focus should not be to create a pastoral profession, but to assist in creating a sense of pastoral vocation. This would be the best title or credit we could grant.

To affirm an ecclesiology of pastoral community is to affirm the life of the body of Christ and to minimize the super-structures that give our congregations so many headaches.

By focusing on developing a biblical pastoral approach, we are really promoting training communities. Training should not come from the seminaries in the sense that they dictate norms to follow. The institutions' expertise should be to "plant the problematic," and then to bring together a synthesis of the experiences of the faith communities, rather than to be the creators of compendiums of answers.

In this way, our congregations can be creators of life and will reflect the image of a communicative God who participates and allows participation. Thus, by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, believers are freed from theological and ecclesiological dependency and become owners of their own destiny. Believers who live in this way practice a theology of solidarity, sharing with others what they have. Only in giving are they imitating Jesus Christ, who is the gracious incarnation of the Word of God.

Seeking Unity in the Constant Presence of Divisions

Unity is the essence and nature of God and humanity. All intent to destroy this unity implies separation, which is adverse to the nature of God's being and God's will that humanity reflect God's image.

For centuries, the warrior axiom of "divide and conquer" has continued to function effectively. Military manuals and practices today express the strategy in sophisticated ways.

Our small Central American countries continue to be politically divided, with the governments in frank opposition to the nature of their populations. One needs only travel by land in Central America to become keenly aware of the difficulties and uncompromising border crossing barriers that hinder the economies and free commercial and human interchange.

Our people have been enslaved to patriotic signs and symbols that merely represent the limits of power. It



FQ/Merie Good

isn't necessary to be a Central American to observe that if Central American economic production were more integrated from country to country, the scene would be totally different. But personal interests and the monopolies of power by a scarce five to eight percent of the population in each country continues our backwardness. It is as Xavier Gorostiaga, a Spanish economist nationalized in Panama, says, "What is in collapse here is a power model that no longer addresses the social dissatisfactions."

We must ask ourselves if our theological programs, which in many cases are very local and denominational, are reinforcing and reproducing this form of structural sin. Our programs must develop identity, but not at the expense of reinforcing division under the pretext of a supposed coherent ecclesiology and theology.

The people of Central America are creating a theology of solidarity and unity that empowers them for living. Its preparation is diverse, but coherent with the reality for this area of the world where more than half the people cannot read and write, but where they nevertheless live the faith and hope of our Lord Jesus Christ.

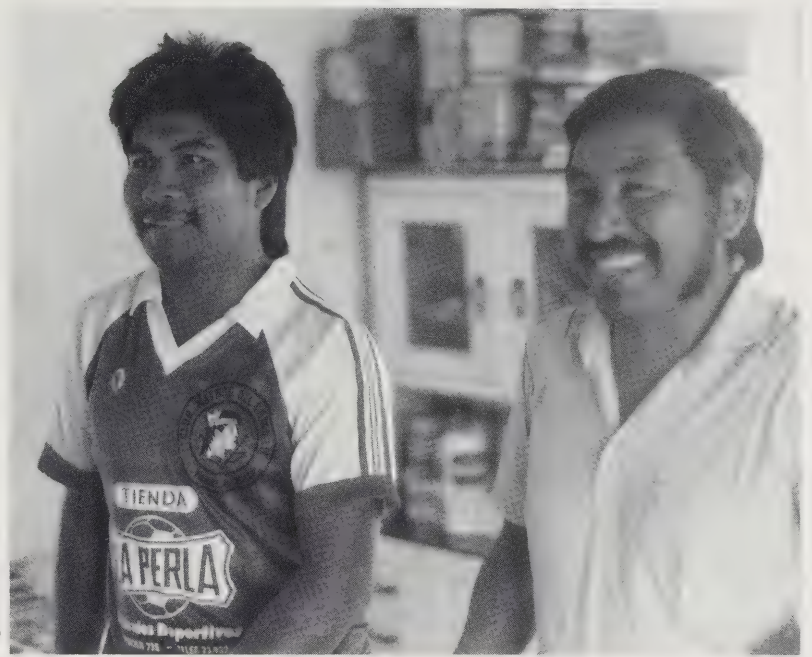
Frequently the distorted doctrine of the church, the self-importance of the theological institutions, and the para-church aspect of our theological programs, are forms which drown the message of salvation. Theology then becomes captive of magisterial programs and high academic studies. It lacks adequate content because it arises from these programs' own agenda and not from the living body of Christ, which is the local community of faith.

All dividedness is death: curriculums separated from reality, traditional and progressive fundamentalism, power conflicts, homicides, wars, divorce in the family. All bear the mark of separations, weeping, and pain. To the indigenous religions that are commonly accused of polytheism, we present our particular doctrinal emphases that sound more like "creed-olotry."

Unity in the biblical sense is essential. It is basic and not a methodological strategy. It must be seen as more than organizational and, instead, as a way of being or a style of life. Our life as believers must be coherent with the realities we live. How can we preach unity when we live with the anxieties of the rich in the middle of a commiserating society? How can we eat our abundant bread peacefully when many people in the world die from lack of bread?⁶

Christian formation is primarily caught. So to those being formed, the teaching person must demonstrate a style of life coherent with the Gospel and the situation within which they both live. Christianity doesn't proceed from doctrine but from following Jesus. Therefore, one of the requirements to be an apostle of the Lord was to have lived with Him. The world is tired of words, discourses, and oratory, even phrases full of good theology, none of which go beyond being an

FQ/Merle Good



intellectual exercise.

True faith community should be the result of theological formation whose content was modeled by God in incarnating the Son Jesus. Authentic evangelical human fellowship leads to divine fellowship.

Practicing Justice and Peace in the Constant Presence of Alienation

Peace is a sign of hope that reconciles, satisfies, integrates, and harmonizes God's creation. All powers that attempt to be lord exercise violence which does not stand before God.

Theology has been used to legitimize wars. In this process, theologians have played a major role. It was thought in the past that the gods participated in wars and weaknesses. The people of Israel misinterpreted their own prophetic heritage by appealing to God for their wars, just as many Christians today don't understand that Yahweh's participation in human life is different than that of the gods of other nations. A theology that attributes bloody war victories to "the arm of God" leads to blasphemy. The salvation promises of the "arm of God" are powerful precisely because they do not use the forms and methods of the pagan peoples in their wars.

The reign of Constantine was a sad example of a time in which God was identified with human powers. The Medieval Crusades also demonstrated the human intention to use God to create sacred places. The martyrdom of Anabaptists at the hands of the Reformers and the Catholic "holy inquisition" are other sad examples of how orthodox zeal identified with violent processes and arbitrary dehumanization.

In Central America the just wars of the Spanish Conquest still cause us pain, even after five centuries have passed. The European colonizations of North America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania were legitimized by theologians who saw the design of God in them.

Peace as Jesus taught and lived it is not easy nor cheap, because it is a suffering, pilgrim theology, and not a peace proceeding from the security of power and complicity. Nowadays many Christians, heirs of past persecution and poverty, cannot risk civil disobedience against their war-making governments, because they now live in opulence and fear losing their privileged positions. Nevertheless, today there is no place for so-called neutrality, silence, and cheap pacifism, for they are part of the theology that upholds the status quo.⁷

It requires courage to promote biblical peace. It is a peace that is neither anesthetic nor neutralizing, but disturbing and disquieting. This peace is an anticipation and sign of the fullness of God that denounces injustice, while proposing ways of human relationships. The peace that Jesus gives to the faith community is not like that which the world gives.

Biblical peace is a style of life, and the nature of those who are daughters and sons of God (Matthew 5:9). It is the evangelizing force of those who are suffering martyrdom and which completes the sufferings of Christ in salvation (II Corinthians 1:3-7). As peacemakers, we are not called to "sacral-ize" any war, regardless of how just it might seem. Nor are we to impede the determination of people on their road to freedom. Instead, we are called to empower life and liberty along with other women and men of good will, who exercise pressure on First World countries to not arm Third World countries, and thus discourage armed confrontation, pain, and death.

The women and men of Central America live with threats to their lives, joy in the middle of persecution, hope where there is no hope—a context in which they are illuminated by the Good News of salvation. This Good News declares life in the face of systems of death and unites, by the grace of God, that which sin divides. It reconciles enemies in the middle of wars and

prepares a new heaven and a new earth where the Shepherd of shepherds, our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, will heal all pain and tears.

Mario Higueros of Guatemala is Academic Dean of SEMILLA, the Central American Mennonite seminary. This article is adapted from the presentation he gave at the conference, "Anabaptist Vision(s) in the 20th Century; Ideas and Outcomes," held in October, 1994 at Goshen (IN) College.

Translated into English by Amzie Yoder.

Endnotes

¹ Juan A. Mackay, *El Otro Cristo Espanol (The Other Spanish Christ)* (Ediciones Semilla, Guatemala, 1989).

² *The World Bank Atlas*, 1994, reports in an extensive article the following data: Guatemala—infant mortality 58% (1992), gross income per capita \$980 (1992), foreign debt \$3000 million (1993), unemployment 42.6%, including underemployment (1990), illiteracy 45%. Nicaragua—infant mortality 53%, gross income per capita \$410 (1992), foreign debt \$11,126 million, unemployment 12% (1990), illiteracy 19% (1990). *Country Report*, The Economist Intelligence Unit, 1993-1994.

³ In 1982, following the principle that "fish can be trapped by eliminating their water," the army decided to eliminate more than a hundred villages considered to be the logistical bases for the guerrilla forces.

⁴ Antonio Nunez, a well-known and respected, evangelical seminary professor wrote the following in the Christian daily newspaper, "La Palabra" (9/84), "... it is not strange that many say that the Gospel has not been a factor to encourage social change, but rather the preservation of the established order. It is clear that the acclaimed 'Protestant apolitical' position has consciously or unconsciously favored forces that resist social transformation. . . . The coincidence of USA economic expansionism and the beginning and progress of Protestant missions in Guatemala cannot be denied. Furthermore, it is evident that there was a certain ideological affinity between Protestantism and Guatemalan liberalism."

⁵ Hans Küng, *Ser Cristiano* (Ed. Cristiandad, Madrid, 1977), 690.

⁶ In our countries, hundreds of families are divided by wars or economic conditions. Many times principal family members have to live and work in North America for the family to survive. President Clinton recently stiffened U.S. refugee policies. The government of El Salvador strongly protested this since nearly a third of El Salvador's national income comes from Salvadorans who live and work in North America and send support to their relatives.

⁷ In August, 1993, the coordinating organization of Guatemalan widows, CONAVIGUA, proposed a law called "patriotic civil and military service." This proposal asks for military service to be truly voluntary. It asks that no one be forced to participate in the military and that everyone have the right to conscientious objection and that a social service be created to address the many social needs of our country (*El Grafico*, 8/30/93). At the risk of their very lives, an increasing number of Christian youth in Honduras and El Salvador are choosing to be conscientious objectors to war and military careers.



FO/Kenneth Pellman

You're Simple, I'm Complex, HE'S CRAZY

by David Augsburger



Artwork by Cheryl Benner

" $E=MC^2$," wrote Einstein in his theory of relativity. "I have faith in this theory and this equation because the mathematics is so simple," he affirmed.

Physicists Niels Bohr and Wolfgang Pauli, debating a proposed law of quantum physics before a Danish audience, used an opposite criterion. Bohr interrupted Pauli with the cry, "It's not crazy enough—it can't be right!" To which Pauli retorted, "It is crazy enough!"

The criteria of simplicity, complexity, and craziness are in use daily, by thinkers and non-thinkers alike. Simplicity is used most often in judging others, complexity in defending oneself, and craziness when all else fails.

Simplicity is the most common rule of thumb for analyzing those we dislike or mistrust. "He's just jealous, that's all. It was all motivated by greed, or lust for power, or pure selfishness." Others' motives appear simple, obvious, driven by a single vice.

Our own shortcomings, in contrast, rise from complex, multifactorial textures of competing values, needs, interests, and hopes, all of which are inevitable and necessary. We act or choose because of the inevitable dilemma of choosing between alternative values. We are torn between mutually exclusive options. Our own motives, when "weighed in the balances," may be less than we wanted them to be but are not finally "found wanting."

"We're only human," we say of ourselves, meaning we are complex, ambivalent creatures who must deal with diversity and adversity. But of the enemy or the adversary we say, "He's all too human," meaning his or her simple motives are obvious. When applied to another, "human" usually means something uncomplimentary.

The causes of human failure are at least fourfold—four fatal "s" words certainly are *sinfulness*, *sickness*,

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stuckness, or stupidity. For ourselves we add a few more “s’s”—safety, security, and survival—to explain our natural self-defenses. For others, however, we continue to suggest they are simply sick, obviously stuck, or undeniably sinful—whichever explanation fits our needs at any given moment. We keep our judgments simple, single-level, tidy. (If you doubt this, I refer you to the letters to the editor in any denominational rag.)

Self-justification tends to go both ways—when one does good, the purposes are pure; when one does evil, the motives are mixed. But criticism is usually one-way. If the person criticized has done something virtuous, it is deceit. If it is a vice, it is true to form.

Ethical issues that involve me or my family are complex and deserve sympathetic, insightful, and compassionate treatment. Moral discrimination of issues involving another’s choices, however, are clear, “Why can’t they see the truth; plain and simple as it is?”

Political problems are sorted out in similar ways. The other side’s positions are partisan and one-sided. Our own stances have many sides. Conservatives, for example, criticize liberals for being too open, too unfocused, too inclusive, too bleeding-hearted. Liberals critique conservatives for being too narrow, too closed, too simplistic, too exclusive, too mean-spirited. Both are reductionistic in their evaluations of the other side; both are too often reductionistic in their central beliefs.

Little in life is simple. Little can be reduced to a single cause, single issue, single problem. For those who think, life is complex and so are its conflicts and difficulties. The temptation to reduce things to a single factor, as Freud did with sexual drives or Marx did with

economics or Reagan did with paranoia or you fill in the words for Gingrich, Gore, Dole, Dobson, Robertson, or Reed . . . (How easily do you slip into reductionism on one of those names?)

We need to pay more attention to a third criterion—is it crazy enough? So many things in life, in ourselves, and in others do not add up perfectly. There are elements of craziness in virtually everyone, including those who present themselves as perfect (perfectionism is sane?) or saintly (sanctity is possible?) or superior (superior to whom?). The craziness of being human includes the mystery of the hidden side. We are, as humans, “fundamentally duplicitous,” to use a borrowed phrase.

Philosopher Albert Camus writes in *The Fall*, “After prolonged research on myself, I brought out the fundamental duplicity of the human being. Then I

realized that modesty helped me shine, humility to conquer, and virtue to oppress.”

The craziness of duplicity is familiar stuff to anyone who looks inward. There’s a dark side to our brightest ideas, lightest moments, most golden acts of kindness. If I can see the craziness within myself, I’m much more understanding of it in those around me.

When a simple explanation of another’s behavior eases your consternation, interrupt it with, “No, it’s not crazy enough.” When a complex defense of your own behavior comes to mind, interject with, “No, its not crazy enough.”

(Thank you, Niels Bohr; much obliged, Wolfgang Pauli.)

David Augsburg has entered the Anabaptist missionary corps by becoming professor of pastoral care and counseling at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA.

Beyond Cuteness to Commitment

by James and Jeanette Krabill

Jane Walmsley, in her book *Brit-Think Amer-Think*, was the first to point it out. To succeed in America, she says, you have to be "cute." Cuteness, as a metaphysical concept for Americans, refers to that which is arresting, appealing, charismatic, and satisfying.

Anyone, anything, and any idea can be called cute, according to Walmsley, so the term is lavishly applied. Endearing children are cute. Raspberry popcorn is cute. So are E.T. and Tom Cruise—cuteness being the only trait these two would appear to have in common.

"Cute" scratches a national itch, notes Walmsley. "It describes everything you want someone (or something) to be. Cute is instant gratification, wish-fulfillment, fantasy come true."

Political leaders these days virtually have to be cute to survive. Clinton wants desperately to be cute and often succeeds. Newt Gingrich is much more naturally cute with far less apparent effort. Ronald Reagan certainly knew how to be cute (and little else). Nancy clearly did not. Though when you put the two together, they made a cute duo for Americans who like watching "chronologically advantaged" couples hold hands.

While we're on the subject, political correctness is ultimate cuteness, except when people actually take it seriously. Then cute turns ugly.

Americans in general can be stirred by almost anything cute. A convincing TV commercial. A half-time show by the Los Angeles Laker Girls.

And Mennonites are not excluded. They increasingly feel the need for cuteness, albeit in ways different from their fellow-American counterparts.

Church boards are about as uncute as one can get. Though some of their programs give us hope that cuteness may still prevail.

Mediation services (a cute way of saying "peacemaking") and crisis relief programs are among the cutest at the moment. Wars, including just ones, are at the bottom of the Mennonite cute list, but they do at least provide

us the opportunity to intervene in needy situations and maintain our cute image around the world.

Church development and leadership training are, on the other hand, definitely *not* cute. For one primary reason. They simply take too long. And everyone knows you can't expect to remain cute forever!

All of this presents an enormous problem as we relate to Christian partners around the world—partners for whom being cute is not particularly a high priority. The very idea, in fact, puts our partners ill-at-ease, for they know that the cute programs we concoct are ultimately designed not to meet their needs, but our own.

Americans are the only people in the world who think they can establish deep friendships and make a significant impact in five minutes or less. (Were it possible, we could speak of "pure cuteness.") In most places on earth it takes a little longer and something more than cuteness. It takes . . . commitment.

Cuteness is sparks and sizzle. Commitment is solid rock. Cuteness, short-lived. Commitment, long haul. Cuteness, living now, for me, without a past or a future. Commitment, planning with partners now for the future as informed by the past.

One of our local colleagues was amused when he heard we were writing an end-of-term report, assessing our assignment here. "When a fisherman falls from his canoe and drowns in the river," he reminded us, "you must wait until his body comes to the surface before you can take a good look at his belly to see whether or not he drank too much palm wine before going fishing!" (Not a very cute image, but then he spoke of commitment.) "In your case," he told us, "the fisherman has barely fallen into the water."



James and Jeanette Krabill live with their three children, Matthew, Elisabeth, and Marie-Laure in Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

A VISUAL FEAST



THE PEOPLE'S PLACE GALLERY

If you would like to see a cross-section of some of the finest work being done by Mennonite-related artists, just write to us for the 15-minute slide presentation called "Art '94." This is a service provided free of charge by our Gallery. The artists represented in "Art '94" are:

Eva Beidler
Jewell Gross Brenneman
Paul Brubaker
Kristen Diener
Ray Dirks
Tim Dyck
Chad Friesen
Jake Goertzen
Nigel Green
Gordon L. Groff
Rodney Harder
Robert E. Helsel
David Peter Hunsberger
Juanita Y. Kauffman
Ruth Ann Meyers Kulp
Lisa Snow Lady
Dick Lehman
Naomi Limont
Darvin Luginbuhl
Gregg Luginbuhl
Renny Magill
Velma Magill
Dennis Maust
John Mishler
Becky Nordvall
Dawn J. Ranck
Arlie J. Regier
Grace Rempel
Marcia Rempel
Sandy Zeiset Richardson
Gene Schmidt
Rebecca Thut
Herb Weaver
Douglas Witmer
Erma Martin Yost
Paul D. Zehr

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• Millersville (PA) University recently hosted a first-of-its-kind Anabaptist women's conference. Held June 8-11, 1995, *The Quiet in the Land?* featured presentations by more than 75 scholars on subjects as diverse as *African Women in Rural and Urban Contexts* and *Three Angry Women: Clara Eby Steiner, Mary Burkhard, and Ruth Yoder*.

Artists and performers were also present. Friday evening found a large crowd listening rapturously while Mennonite poets **Jean Janzen**, Fresno, CA; **Sarah Klassen**, Winnipeg, MB; **Di Brandt**, Winnipeg, MB; and **Julia Kasdorf**, Brooklyn, NY; read from their recent works.

The hall was also filled Saturday evening for a combined drama and musical presentation. Artist **Johnna Schmidt**, San Francisco, CA, charmed the audience with a one-person performance—*Prayers for Girls*, tying her Kansas Mennonite upbringing to her life as a late 20th century artist and

performer. **Carol Ann Weaver**, a composer and musician from Waterloo, ON, wrote, produced, directed, and played keyboard for *Quietly Landed?*, celebrating the writings of Mennonite women across the centuries.

• The **Shenandoah Valley Bach Festival**—June 11-18, 1995—once again found a home at Eastern Mennonite University. EMU professor, **Kenneth Nafziger**, served as music director and conductor for a week filled with the music of Johann Sebastian Bach and Felix Mendelssohn.

• Each year on the same weekend in August as the Abbotsford International Air Show, the **Fraser Valley Arts and Peace Festival** is held on the campus of University College of the Fraser Valley, Abbotsford, BC. Through a weekend of visual arts, drama, writing, film, and music, festival-goers are challenged to seek

non-violent responses to all forms of violence. The 1995 festival—August 10-13—was subtitled "Voices for Peace, Justice, and the Integrity of Creation." It was organized by **Langley Mennonite Fellowship** and the Fraser Valley chapter of **Project Ploughshares**.

• Canadian Mennonite Bible College and Concord College offered a music competition in conjunction with the biennial Church Music Seminar held in early 1995 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. **Larry Warkentin**, Fresno, California, won the original hymn text and tune contest for his hymn, "God of the Lion." Others who were recognized included **Andrew Kreider**, Elkhart, Indiana; **Larry Nickel**, Clearbrook, British Columbia; **Audrey Falk Jantzen**, Rosthern, Saskatchewan; and **Carol Dyck**, Edmonton, Alberta. All winning entries were performed at the Music Seminar.

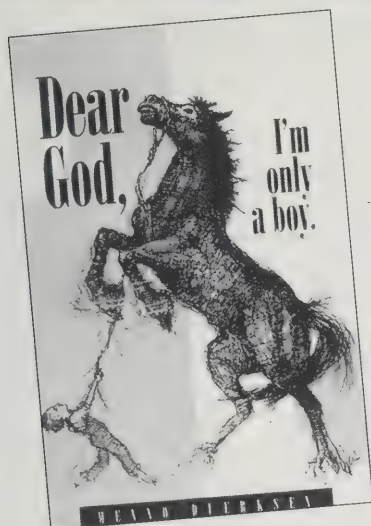
• A third recording of choral music has been produced by **Larry Nickel**, Clearbrook, British Columbia. *Through an Open Window* is recorded by the West Coast Mennonite Chamber Choir and directed by **Tony Funk**.

• Prior to the age of mass-produced music books, Mennonite school masters hand-copied and decorated scores (also called singing books) for their students. The Mennonite Archives of Ontario at Conrad Grebel College recently received such a singing book, created by **Catherine Kratz** and dated February 17, 1810. It is the second-oldest known music manuscript produced by Mennonites in Canada.

• **Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA)** recently began supporting two new programs—one in Zimbabwe and one in Haiti. In Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, the newly established Phakama Savings and Credit Cooperative Society has a goal to make funds available to 3000 micro-entrepreneurs in four years, 60 percent of whom will be women. In Haiti, MEDA will support Willys Geffard, the new project director of FURREC, an emergency reconstruction project working at job-creation activities such as rebuilding roads, canals, sewers, and garbage disposal facilities. Geffard is a native Haitian, educated at Eastern (PA) College.



• Mennonite artist **Juanita Y. Kauffman**, Goshen, IN, showed her work at St. Boniface Galleries in New York. The show, "Fire and Water: Dyes on Silk and Drawings," ran from July 20 through August 28. St. Boniface is in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, 1047 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, New York.



• A small Newton, Kansas, publisher—Wordsworth—announces the publication of two titles. *Wayside Revelations* gathers the writings of the former *Mennonite Weekly Review* columnist and naturalist **Roy Wilson Henry**. Henry's delight in the sounds and sights of the natural world shines from the pages of this collection.

A revised and expanded edition of *Dear God, I'm Only a Boy* by **Menno Duerksen** (first published by Castle Books, 1986) has also been released by Wordsworth.

• The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada has received the manuscript for Volume III of *Mennonites in Canada*. Earlier volumes were written by **Frank Epp** and published in 1974 and 1982. Volume III has been written by **Ted Regehr** and will be published by the University of Toronto Press. It covers the years between 1945 and 1970 and addresses the many significant changes in the Canadian Mennonite community during those years.

• The new Mennonite Brethren hymnal, *Worship Together*, has 700 entries—songs and spoken worship resources. It replaces the 1971 MB *Worship Hymnal* and focuses on Anabaptist Mennonite emphases from an evangelical orientation. The new hymnal includes longtime favorites such as "Holy God, We Praise Thy Name" and "How Great Thou Art," as well as contemporary songs such as "Lord, Listen to Your Children" and "You Are Lord." Available from The Christian Press, Winnipeg, MB.

• The following titles are available from Herald Press: 1) *The Turning*

Point by **Alex Sareyan** describes how Civilian Public Service workers first instigated and later supervised major changes in the care of America's mentally ill; 2) *The Essential Carlstadt* by **E.J. Furcha** chronicles the life and thought of **Andreas Bodenstein Von Karlstadt**, a radical reformer who strongly influenced the Anabaptist movement; 3) *We Are the Pharisees* by **Kathleen Kern** invites gospel readers to identify with the Pharisees rather than denouncing them for their pride and hypocrisy; 4) *Whispering Brook Farm* by **Carrie Bender** follows in the style of Bender's earlier light Christian fiction.

• Goshen College's Pinchpenny Press published three books during the 1994-95 school year. *J.C. Penny & Other Camp Skits*, edited by **Telissa Yoder-Sickler** and illustrated by **Melinda Spohn**, is a collection of Bible and summer camp skits. *A Green Dance* by **Dawn Zehr** is a collection of "prose, pictures, and scraps of prose that look to find their way through pain toward healing." The third book, a poem written for the centennial of Goshen College by **Nick Lindsay**, is designed by **Lowell Brown** and published as *The Cowtail Whip*.

• *Against the Wind* by **John Friesen** is a history of four Mennonite villages (Gnadental, Gruenfeld, Neu-Chortitza, and Steinfeld) in southern Ukraine. *Without Shedding of Blood* by **Kevin James Block** is an historical novel about Samuel Beamer, a Mennonite who enlists in the British militia in order to fight the Americans during the War of 1812. Both titles published by Windflower Communications, Winnipeg, MB.

• *Bread of Life: Diaries and Memories of a Dakota Family* by **Marian Kleinsasser Towne** combines the diaries of Towne's father, **John P. Kleinsasser**, with fictionalized memories of the events his writings describe. The story is set in a Hutterite community near Freeman, South Dakota. For more information write to **Marian K. Towne**, 5129 N. Illinois St., Indianapolis, IN 46208-2613.

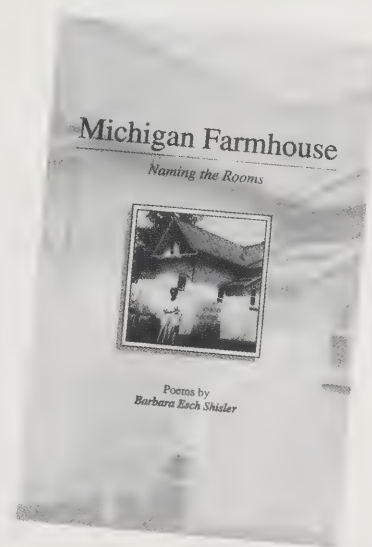
• *Willie: Forever Young* by **Margaret Fast** with **Dora Dueck** relates the story of losing a child from a mother's point of view. Honestly told, it attests to the power of love, family, and faith.

Published by Bill and Margaret Fast, Winnipeg, MB.

• **Franklin L. Yoder** has written *Opening a Window to the World*. A history of Iowa Mennonite School, Kalona, Iowa, the book was released to coincide with the school's 50th anniversary celebrations. For more information write to Iowa Mennonite School, 1421 540 Street SW, Kalona, Iowa 52247.

• *The Song I Hear* is a book of poems by **Larry Warkentin**, Fresno, CA. While it contains few references to quilts, zwieback, or Russia, the collection mirrors a simple Mennonite faith and a love for life. It is self-published.

• *Michigan Farmhouse* is a book of poems by **Barbara Esch Shisler**, Telford, PA. Arranged metaphorically around the rooms of the author's Michigan home, the poems have a lyric, rural quality. Published by Ryanna Books, Richmond, IN.



• *Peace Was in Their Hearts* by **Richard C. Anderson**, himself a World War II conscientious objector, records the experiences of the more than 1000 men who refused to fight in the war. In this account, many of them speak passionately about how Civilian Public Service shaped their lives during the war and their occupations after the war. Published by Correlan Publications, Watsonville, CA.

Global Gods: Exploring the Role of Religions in Modern Societies, David W. Shenk. Herald Press, 1995. 392 pages, \$16.95, paperback.

Reviewed by Larry Kehler

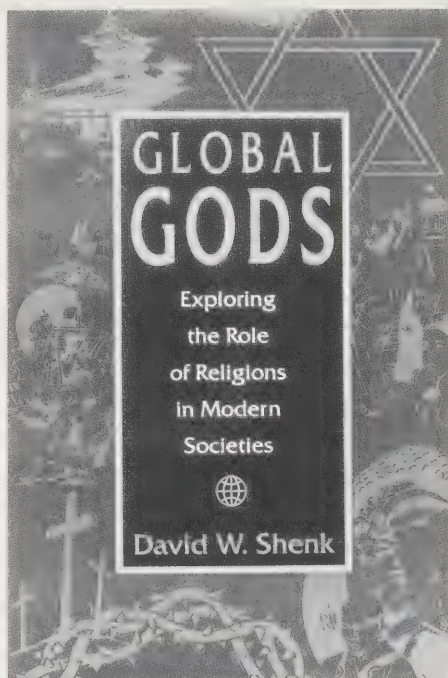
Sometimes our discussions in church and in the coffee shop about *other religions* devolve into rather shallow caricatures of these belief systems. In this book, David Shenk provides churches, schools, and interested individuals with an excellent resource to better understand the broad array of religious persuasions in today's world.

In 13 well-written and researched chapters, Shenk first looks at some of the general issues, then moves into the history, examining both the strengths and liabilities of each of the major religious and intellectual streams which influence the modern world.

The author, who directs the overseas program of Eastern Mennonite Missions, Salunga, Pennsylvania, leaves no doubt about his own deep commitment to Christ and the church, but he does not hesitate to scrutinize Christianity through the same lens which he uses to examine other religions. While he is candid about the shortcomings of the various belief systems, he also highlights their strengths. For example, he points out how the African primal religions focused on the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Shenk also demonstrates from his own experiences how important it is to be willing to dialogue with representatives of other religions and to even be willing to learn from them. Our tendencies as Mennonites are similar to those of other evangelical groups; we avoid talking to people of other faiths and even other Christian denominations because we don't want to appear to be giving credence to their points of view. The author shows that it is possible to be unabashedly Christian and still converse at a deep level with people who are committed to another belief system.

I see this book as a good resource in a variety of settings. It would serve well as a text for a college-level world religions course. If a small group in church or an adult-level Sunday school class would decide to study



one or more of the global religious movements, this book would provide an excellent base for such a series of discussions. Each chapter concludes with a helpful set of questions for reflection.

In the continuing pluralization of North American society, where we may find ourselves with next-door neighbors who are Muslim and people living across the street who are Hindu and a household on the next block who is Buddhist, it behooves us as individual Christians and as families and congregations to do some reading and studying to see how we can best relate to these new neighbors. David Shenk's book will be a real help to anyone setting out on such a quest.

Larry Kehler, Winnipeg, Manitoba, is the Asia Secretary for the General Conference Mennonite Church's Commission on Overseas Missions.

FQ price—\$13.56
(Regular price—16.95)

You Can Lead Singing, Glenn Lehman. Good Books, 1995. 93 pages, \$6.95, paperback.

Reviewed by Mary K. Oyer

This book presents in 93 pages and 22 brief chapters a systematic approach to congregational song leading. Its author, Glenn Lehman, is a skillful leader and choir director whose competence does not blur his memory of the important first steps in learning to lead. These he explains with clarity, humor, and an obvious respect for the beginner.

In the first nine chapters—on pitch, hand signals, poetic and musical rhythm, and tempo—he illustrates points with simple line drawings and concludes with lists of "Skills to Practice." Analogies help to clarify his directions. For example, to explain how the hand feels in signing beats, he suggests: "Bounce your hand as if it is jumping off a trampoline."

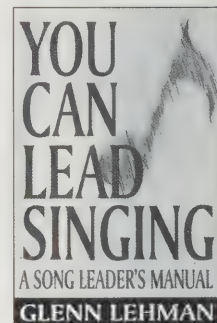
The last half of the book raises related issues that will interest seasoned leaders as well as beginners—leading with an instrument, training young people, singing from memory, and "things that plug in."

The book is filled with thought-provoking comments which one rarely finds articulated: "At the end of a hymn, simply take your seat. You owe the group no thank you" and "God breathes into us; we exhale song."

The Mennonite Hymnal and *Hymnal: A Worship Book* are used for illustration. The "Glossary and Index of Musical Terms" defines words and refers the reader back to pertinent pages in the text.

Mary K. Oyer teaches the arts and worship at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana.

FQ price—\$5.56
(Regular price—6.95)



The Cock's Egg, Rosemary Nixon. NeWest Press, 1994. 167 pages, \$12.95, paperback.

Reviewed by Anna Juhnke

Fifteen white missionaries and Mennonite Central Committee teachers in Zaire experience sand fleas and army ants, along with the discomfort of being aliens in the 19 stories of this collection. They try hard, but they resent the Zaireans for laughing at them. Most of the expatriate women are acutely uncomfortable with their own sweating bodies and their sexuality.

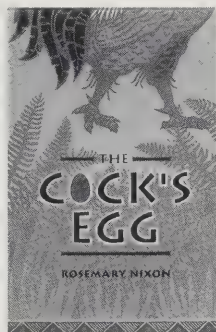
The foreigners dismiss *ndoki* (witchcraft) explanations for the grotesque events in the villages—Kimpese and Milundu. But the reader is haunted by glimpses of mysteries. In the third story, for example, the blood-red cock makes a trip to learn truth from the goddess of Vampa Falls. He reappears in most of the stories, symbol of both sexuality and *ndoki*.

The stories are rich but demanding. The reader must sometimes grope for orientation at the beginning of a story and accept inconclusiveness at the end. There are untranslated French and Kikongo phrases, and the stories are not in either chronological or geographical order. A second reading reveals more links between the stories and more layers of symbolism.

Rosemary Nixon has a wonderful gift for description, including sound, smell, and touch. Those who have served in Africa will find these stories evoking vivid memories. Some may even identify with a cultural chameleon, Simbi, the Zairean nurse in Canada. They, too, have learned to look in two directions at once and to blend in with their surroundings.

Anna K. Juhnke is professor of English at Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas.

FQ price—\$10.36
(Regular price—12.95)



Border Crossing: A Spiritual Journey, Katie Funk Wiebe. Herald Press, 1995. 229 pages, \$10.95, paperback.

Reviewed by James Reusser

Older age is something none of us can avoid if we live long enough. In *Border Crossing*, Katie Funk Wiebe shares her personal experiences in making that last important border crossing in life.

This is not an objective analysis of the issues around aging. It is not a guidebook. It simply opens windows for the reader to see the thoughts, struggles, and feelings of the author as she makes her crossing.

A master storyteller, Wiebe relates stories from all the stages of her life as she searches to find the spiritual meanings and tasks of old age. As she says, "The truer statement about our faith is always our personal story."

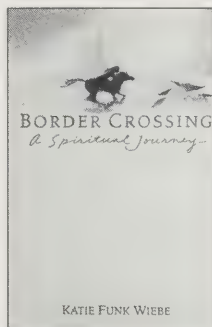
Each chapter is an essay which is a delight to read. Wiebe's rich faith leaves its stamp on every page.

This book is filled with thought-provoking and quotable one-liners. "Old age is real living," "We are all immigrants to the land of the aging," and "Choosing becomes the supreme vocation of old age."

Anyone faced with issues of aging will find direction and inspiration.

James Reusser, Kitchener, Ontario, is a retired Mennonite pastor.

FQ price—8.76
(Regular price—10.95)



Birthday Chickens, Shirley Kurtz, illustrated by Cheryl Benner. Good Books, 1994. 32 pages, \$6.95, paperback.

Reviewed by Laura Blosser Draper

"Cool!" So pronounces my six-year-old as I finish reading him this unusual story about a boy who loved to eat eggs and who got a box of chicks for his birthday one year.

According to Kurtz, whose own son once got a similar box for his birthday, the baby chicks liked the mash the boy fed them "all right, but what they really gobbled up were the bugs. It was like a football game whenever the boy brought a bug." I remember the tiny, fluffy balls that totally enthralled students when they hatched at school this spring. The

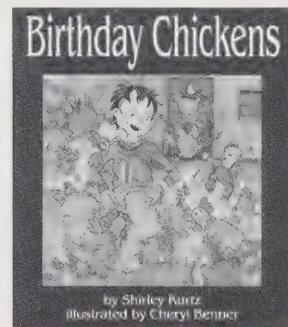


image of little chicks "pouncing and racing around the box, chasing, and attacking and grabbing with their beaks" makes me laugh aloud.

My son likes best the part where the boy gets to see a chicken's egg come out and the chicken cackles "right in his face."

Birthday Chickens is fresh, informative, and full of humor. Appropriate recipes and a birthday cake design are offered following the story. Cheryl Benner's colorful full-page illustrations play up each page of text with a zesty, light-hearted perspective. A good story for reading aloud, it is also in a format that can easily be used with a group of children.

Laura Blosser Draper is full-time mother of three and a private music instructor who lives with husband Steve and family in Winfield, Iowa.

FQ price—\$5.56
(Regular price—6.95)

Cup of Water, Bread of Life, Ronald J. Sider. Zondervan Publishing House, 1994. 186 pages, \$9.99, paperback.

Reviewed by Clare Ann Ruth-Heffelbower

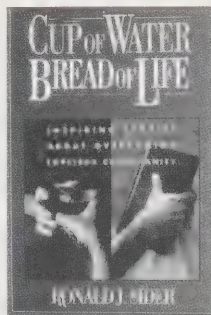
Cup of Water, Bread of Life is a companion volume to Sider's earlier book, *One-Sided Christianity?*, in which he provides the theological foundation for holistic mission, including both evangelism and social transformation. *Cup of Water, Bread of Life* tells stories of people successfully carrying out such ministries. They live in places as diverse as inner-city Chicago and Bali.

The subtitle says the stories are inspiring. That they are. They are also challenging. As Mennonites, who tend to be more comfortable in social ministries, we might expect to be challenged to become more comfortable with evangelism. That message does come through. But we are stretched in both directions as we see the passion and commitment of the people in the stories. Many of our efforts look tame in comparison. Their hard work, compassion, and dependence on the Holy Spirit call us to new commitment and new openness to God's Spirit.

In spite of Sider's warning not to idealize the people in the stories, one does come away from the book somewhat intimidated or at least humbled. There are many exportable ideas from the stories, however. Everyone who reads the book will acquire practical ideas for ministering to the whole person.

Clare Ann Ruth-Heffelbower, Fresno, California, is co-pastor of Peace Community Church and Area Minister in Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference.

FQ price—\$7.99
(Regular price—\$9.99)



Black Spider over Tiegenhoff, James D. Yoder. Herald Press, 1995. 232 pages, \$10.95, paperback.

Reviewed by Rich Foss

"There ought to be more people like the Mennonites," Hitler is quoted in this novel. Presuming the novel is historically accurate, it's no wonder Hitler was pleased with the Mennonites.

In the 1930s Esther and Gerhard Claassen are German Mennonites who applaud the economic revival Hitler sets in motion. They appreciate his support of family farms. Hermann, their older son joins the *Luftwaffe*, and Christian, the younger son, joins the Hitler youth. Their pastor preaches Romans 13 in support of the government.

Despite acculturation, the seeds of Mennonite faith are still present in the family. In response to a plea from a Jewish doctor, they take in his daughter, disguising her as a Mennonite.

World War II proves to be a grief-filled awakening for the family. Well-researched, the novel captures German Mennonites caught in the nationalistic tide of the 1930s and 1940s.

The first half of the novel is better history than fiction. Olga, a Nazi maid who plays a prominent role early in the novel, is not believable, and I kept being amused by her dramatics.

But as the Claassens flee the Russians at the end of the war, the writing takes on power. Yoder is at his most captivating in depicting the terror, chaos, ethical quagmire, and will to survive common to refugees.

Rich Foss recently published his first novel, *Jonas and Sally*. He is a pastoral elder at Plow Creek Fellowship, Tiskilwa, Illinois.

FQ price—\$8.76
(Regular price—\$10.95)



Growing Up Plain, Shirley Kurtz. Good Books, 1994. 63 pages, \$9.95, hardcover.

Reviewed by Arbutus B. Sider

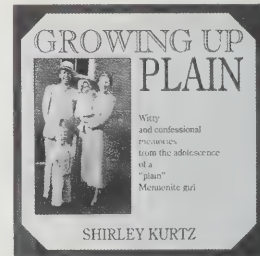
It is the photograph on the back of this book's jacket that captures the reader. Three of its four teenagers are male and could be any boys going home from school. The fourth is unmistakably a plain Mennonite girl. The caption, "Another seeming injustice: Mennonite boys could look pretty ordinary," expresses one of the painful realities for a female adolescent growing up plain.

Readers like myself, who grew up "plain," will easily identify with this narrative. It is about outward appearances and how they changed. Numerous photographs carry the story well. The hair gets shorter; so do the skirts. The capes disappear; coverings shrink. Unfortunately, the rendering does not move far beyond surface changes. Kurtz asserts there is "virtue in plainness" and "truth in rules" but gives us few clues as to what that means for her. Clearly, she is proud to pass her heritage on to her children.

But we look elsewhere to find a redemptive interpretation of our legacy of plainness. I introduce my daughter to foremothers like those in *Amish Women* and *A Mennonite Woman's Life* because they inspire us to carry our faith message into the future. I happily share with her *Growing Up Plain* when I want to give her a nostalgic glimpse into my past.

Arbutus Sider is a therapist with a marriage and family practice in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

FQ price—7.96
(Regular price—\$9.95)



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B. Books as Reviewed

___ Global Gods (<i>Shenk</i>), paper	16.95	13.56
___ You Can Lead Singing (<i>Lehman</i>), paper	6.95	5.56
___ The Cock's Egg (<i>Nixon</i>), paper	12.95	10.36
___ Border Crossing (<i>Wiebe</i>), paper	10.95	8.76
___ Birthday Chickens (<i>Kurtz & Benner</i>), paper	6.95	5.56
___ Cup of Water, Bread of Life (<i>Sider</i>), paper	9.99	7.99
___ Black Spider over Tiegenhoff (<i>Yoder</i>), paper	10.95	8.76
___ Growing Up Plain (<i>Kurtz</i>), hard	9.95	7.96

C. Past Offers

___ Anabaptist/Mennonite Faith and Economics (<i>Redekop, Krahn, Steiner</i>), paper	33.00	29.70
___ The Limits of Perfection (<i>Sawatsky & Holland</i>), paper	10.00	9.00
___ Prayers of an Omega (<i>Wiebe</i>), paper	6.95	5.56
___ Family Violence (<i>Miller</i>), paper	9.95	7.96
___ Old Testament Ethics (<i>Janzen</i>), paper	19.99	15.99
___ Daniel (<i>Lederach</i>), paper	17.95	14.36
___ Why Didn't I Just Raise Radishes?, (<i>Davis</i>), paper	7.95	6.36
___ Storytime Jamboree (<i>Dyck</i>), paper	6.95	5.56

D. Books as Advertised

___ Moving Toward the Mainstream (<i>Fitzkee</i>), paper—p.2	9.95	7.96
___ The Clashing Worlds of Economics and Faith (<i>Halteman</i>), paper—p.4	12.95	10.36
___ The God of Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel (<i>Shenk</i>), paper—p.4	14.95	11.96
___ The God of Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel (<i>Shenk</i>), hard—p.4	24.95	19.96
___ Whispering Brook Farm (<i>Bender</i>), paper—p.4	6.95	5.56
___ A Fruitful Vine (<i>Bender</i>), paper—p.4	6.95	5.56
___ A Winding Path (<i>Bender</i>), paper—p.4	6.95	5.56
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___ Two Amish Folk Artists (<i>Stoltzfus</i>), paper—p.6	19.95	15.96
___ Snake in the Parsonage (<i>Janzen</i>), paper—p.23	9.95	7.96
___ Three Mennonite Poets (<i>Janzen, Yaguchi, Waltner-Toews</i>), paper—p.23	8.95	7.16

___ Three Mennonite Poets (<i>Janzen, Yaguchi, Waltner-Toews</i>), hard—p.23	13.95	11.16
___ Going Places (<i>Good</i>), paper—p.23	6.95	5.56
___ I Hear the Reaper's Song (<i>Stambaugh</i>), paper—p.23	8.95	7.16
___ I Hear the Reaper's Song (<i>Stambaugh</i>), hard—p.23	12.95	10.36
___ Jonas and Sally (Foss), hard—p.23	19.95	15.96
___ Meditations for New Moms (<i>Drescher-Lehman</i>), paper—p.36	7.95	6.36
___ The Best of Mennonite Fellowship Meals (<i>Good & Stoltzfus</i>), paper—p.36	11.95	9.56
___ 1996 Mennonite Women's Calendar, paper—p.40	9.95	7.96

E. Other Noteworthy Books

___ The Best of Mennonite Fellowship Meals (<i>Good & Stoltzfus</i>), paper	11.95	9.56
___ Brilliant Idiot (<i>Schmitt & Clemens</i>), paper	9.95	7.96
___ Climbing Down the Ladder (<i>Wenger</i>), paper	8.95	7.16
___ Coming Home (<i>Shenk</i>), paper	9.95	7.96
___ A Craftsman's Handbook: Henry Lapp, paper	15.95	12.76
___ Harmonia Sacra (<i>Funk & Sons</i>), hard	19.95	15.96
___ A History of the Amish (<i>Nolt</i>), paper	9.95	7.96
___ Mennonite Foods & Folkways from South Russia, Vol. 1 (<i>Voth</i>), hard	24.95	19.96
___ Mennonite Foods & Folkways from South Russia, Vol. 2 (<i>Voth</i>), hard	19.95	15.96
___ The Mennonite Starter Kit (<i>Haas & Nolt</i>), paper	5.95	4.76
___ Mennonite Mosaic (<i>Kauffman & Driedger</i>), paper	15.95	12.76
___ Mirror of the Martyrs (<i>Oyer & Kreider</i>), paper	9.95	7.96
___ Parenting for the '90s (<i>Osborne</i>), paper	9.95	7.96
___ Readings from Mennonite Writings (<i>Haas</i>), paper	14.95	11.96
___ Seeking Peace (<i>Peachey & Peachey</i>), paper	11.95	9.56
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—Booklist

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Sara Stambaugh

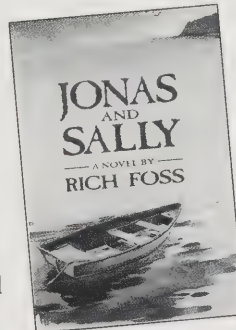
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A Gift for the Grandchildren

In the fall of 1994, Esther Rose (Buckwalter) Graber, Aibonito, Puerto Rico, painted and wrote a children's book, illustrating and telling the stories of her extended family. "I wanted my grandchildren to get a feel for the past and for their roots. I wanted them to remember and to be inspired by the stories of their grandparents and great-grandparents."

With the help of her son, Steve, she produced several copies of the treasured book. For Christmas 1994 each of her children—Jane, Ellen, Sibyl, Ann, Susan, and Steve—received a copy to share with their spouses and children—Esther Rose's grandchildren.

The book begins with Daniel Graber—the immigrant ancestor who rode a ship from the "old country" to Iowa. It illuminates the lives of the Grabers, Swartzendrubers, Buckwalters, and Shenks, remembering their devotion to the church and relating an occasional unusual incident.

Joe and Minnie (Swartzendruber) Graber, well known Mennonite missionaries to India, are followed from Hesston (KS) College to India and back to Hesston with their young children, Ronald (Esther Rose's husband) and Eleanor.

Earl and Rose (Shenk) Buckwalter, longtime servants of Pennsylvania Mennonite Church, now called Whitestone Mennonite Church, are seen tooling around Hesston, Kansas, in a motorcycle with a sidecar.

Their youngest child, Esther Rose, describes the circumstances of her first date with Ronald Graber. "One day Esther was sitting in a very serious class at Hesston College when someone handed her a folded note. She opened the note and read, 'Will you go out with me tonight? If the answer is Yes smile. If No stand up and wave your arms about.' It was signed, Ronald Graber."

In this warm and colloquial voice, Esther Rose Graber has chosen to share her story with her children and grandchildren. —LS

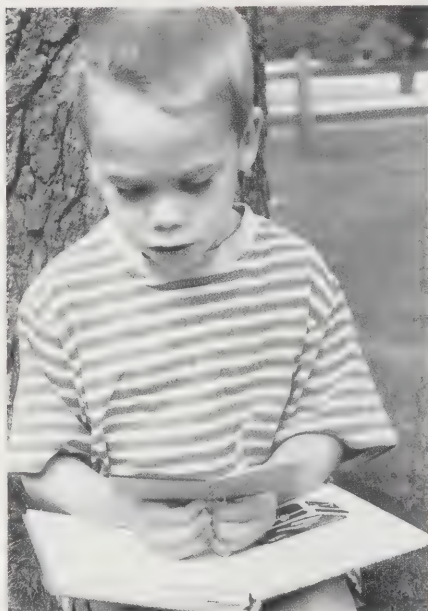


Photo by Keith Graber Miller

Niles Graber Miller holds the book given by his grandmother, Esther Graber.

Goshen College Graduate Spends Summer with Garrison Keillor

Early in the spring of 1995, Rachel Lapp, Goshen, Indiana, got a call "out of the blue" from "A Prairie Home Companion." In an interview with *Festival Quarterly*, Lapp related the story of having sent a resume for a possible internship in the fall of 1994 to Keillor's public radio show. The internship did not develop, but someone at Minnesota Public Radio found the resume and gave her a call when an unsalaried summer position opened up. Lapp decided to go for it and believes she was the first Mennonite person to work for Garrison Keillor. She moved to St. Paul near the end of May 1995 and finished her summer work the first week in August.

She enjoyed working with both the "Prairie Home Companion" and "Writers' Almanac" staff. One day Keillor walked into the space where

Lapp was trying to organize a rather large project. After determining that her space was too small, he said, "You can use my office while I'm on vacation." So she did.

A 1995 communications graduate of Goshen College, Lapp spoke with enthusiasm of her summer experiences. "My favorite thing was answering listener mail. I even got several letters back thanking me for having sent personal responses."

Lapp plans to spend some time traveling in Europe after which she will be "looking for work either in public radio or the print media." She resides in Goshen, Indiana, with her parents, Jerry and Anita Stalter Lapp.

—LS

Rachel Lapp outside the Fitzgerald Theater in St. Paul, Minnesota



Toys of Violence Shaped into Plowshare



Children at Wichita '95 help Esther and Myron Augsburger attach toys of violence to a plowshare sculpture.

It seemed a daring—maybe even impossible—idea: invite children of Mennonite families to bring their war toys to a Mennonite church convention. Did they own any? Would they bring them if they did?

Intent on offering an exhibit on peace that involved children and gave them ways to actively participate, planners of the Peace Factory dreamed up a sculpture of war toys. The Peace Factory stage and exhibit area became a magnet at the recent Mennonite and General Conference Mennonite Church convention, Wichita '95, drawing persons of all ages to its many events.

Planners turned to Esther Augsburger, who is already immersed in a massive project with similar themes. A long-time resident of Washington, D.C., Augsburger and her son Michael are at work on a large sculpture to be placed on a downtown plaza surrounded by federal government buildings. The Augsburgers have fashioned a 16 foot-high plowshare, onto which they are welding guns, accumulated by the city in an extensive gun buy-back program. Once completed, and then approved by

a host of city and federal planners, the sculpture will take its place among the capital's many permanent outdoor monuments.

In contrast, the Peace Factory sculpture is portable and will continue to take on new pieces. Augsburger designed the "plowshare" framework ahead of the conference, then constructed it on-site out of pipes and heavy mesh. Children brought their toys, which Augsburger and her husband, Myron, wired onto the mesh as an audience watched. One of Augsburger's fears was borne out. "I was worried that we wouldn't get enough guns! And not many toys came, hopefully because Mennonite children just don't have those kinds of toys. Too many of our kids do have Nintendos and Ninja Turtles. We should have

broadened the request to include those, I guess."

Despite not receiving a lot of contributions to the evolving sculpture, Augsburger found the exchange useful with those who participated. "The children came and showed me their toys and how they worked and what they represented. They knew what they were doing. Later I heard kids bring their friends and say, 'That's mine. I brought that one.' And after the initial gathering, more kids showed up with toys, and I've continued to attach them."

"Toys of Violence into Plowshares" will now travel to Mennonite communities, accumulating toys as it goes.

Augsburger believes the ongoing event "provides a chance to teach children about the terrible violence of these instruments. My kids used to think they were the only ones not allowed to have guns. Now, with all these kids bringing their violent toys and putting them on the sculpture, a kind of solidarity can develop among them. They aren't alone in their refusal to use guns, even for play."

—PPG

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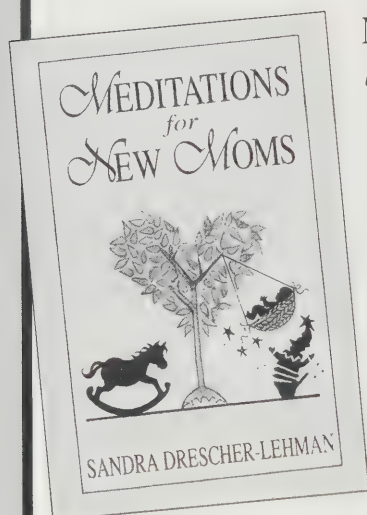
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Meditations for New Moms

by Sandra Drescher-Lehman

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Drescher-Lehman's own hands and heart are deep in this subject. She is a writer mom to two pre-schoolers. Her voice is gritty, yet grateful. Her moods move through the range all mothers know. She brings comfort. She lends identification to this most basic, yet most personal experience.

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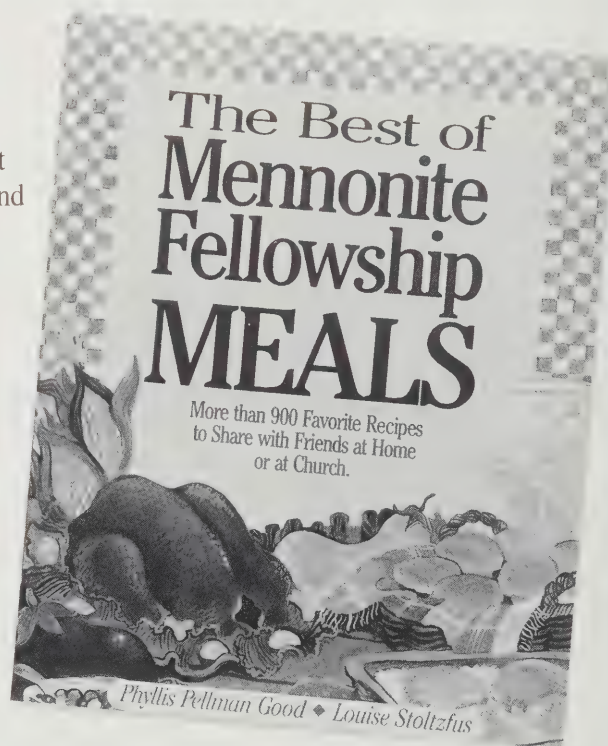
The Best of Mennonite Fellowship Meals

by Phyllis Pellman Good and Louise Stoltzfus

Favorite recipes to share with friends at home or at church. More than 800 recipes ranging from Sweet and Sour Baked Beans to Potluck Fondue, from Seven Layer Salad to Tarragon Mushrooms, from Amish Vanilla Pie to Tapioca Dessert, from Sloppy Joes to Chicken with Ginger, and from Homemade Rolls to Native Bannock.

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Apollo 13—A rare accomplishment. Director Ron Howard marshals the events of the flawed 1970 Apollo mission into a riveting adventure. The interplay of scientific precision with the humanity of the astronauts creates a marvelous texture and thrill. (9)

Bad Boys—A hip cop/buddy flick. Has some humor tucked away among the clichés as the twosome (surprise, surprise) case out a drug heist. (3)

Batman Forever—An intriguing designer-hued sequel to the successful cinematic spin-off of the TV series. A dark and gloomy struggle between Two-Face and his evil schemes and the reluctant Batman. (5)

Before the Rain—A highly original, poetic but involving portrait of conflict between Christians and Muslims in Macedonia. A young monk risks great danger by sheltering a young Muslim girl. Two other stories interweave. (8)

Braveheart—An epic look at 13th-century Scottish leader William Wallace. Not a fine epic, mind you, but serviceable. Battle scenes outshine the human interest moments. (6)

The Bridges of Madison County—Somewhat solemn tale of a photographer who comes to Iowa to photograph covered bridges and falls in love with a local farmer's wife (who dreams way beyond the corn stalks). Has a stiff quality to a story that's supposed to be full of passion. Great acting. (6)

Burnt by the Sun—A lush, impressionistic look at a member of the secret police in the 1930s, set near the wheat fields outside Moscow. (6)

Circle of Friends—Three Catholic girls go off to school in 1950s Dublin. A warmhearted love story, laced with some intrigue and betrayal. (6)

Clueless—A teen picture which wavers between cardboard stereotypes and would-be satire. A very rich Beverly Hills girl has more schemes for her friends' lives than for her own. (3)

Congo—Misfires. An interesting idea, which needs imaginative treatment, falls into the hands of formula filmmakers. A multinational corporation

sets its sights on African treasures guarded by angry gorillas. (4)

Crimson Tide—As war movies go, with all of Hollywood's fine-tuning, this one is excellent. Two generations of military leaders clash over the meaning of war—bottled up in a nuclear sub at sea which loses its communication link. Very involving. Gene Hackman and Denzel Washington excel. (8)

Die Hard with a Vengeance—Relentless nonstop action film about a cop determined to outwit a bomber who's going to blow things up. Very effective as a grunting, breathless sequence of stunts. (4)

The Englishman Who Went Up a Hill But Came Down a Mountain—A mildly amusing yarn about a Welsh town who has their mountain measured, only to discover it's a hill—and the solutions they pursue. (5)

First Knight—Why does Richard Gere ruin every picture he's in? Because he can't bring himself to play anyone beside pretty boy Richard Gere, I guess. A fresh spin on the Camelot story turns to mush fit to flush. A pity. (3)

Forget Paris—An NBA referee meets an airline agent in Paris. They fall in love. But how to live? Sometimes funny, sometimes disappointing. (5)

French Kiss—A B-grade, paint-by-the-numbers yarn about a young woman who's been jilted and tries to get him back or get even. (3)

The Glass Shield—A cut above the average cop picture, highlighting prejudice and miscarriage of justice in the police department in L.A. (4)

The Indian in the Cupboard—A warm, engaging fantasy about a 9-year-old boy and the plastic Indian in his cupboard which comes alive. (6)

Jefferson in Paris—Forget it. Even if you love history and costume pictures, forget it. An un-story about Thomas Jefferson, though it's hard to tell. (2)

Johnny Mnemonic—A boring futuristic flick about a "wet-wired brain" who absorbs huge amounts of data, pursued by gangsters. (1)

Judge Dredd—Set in futuristic Mega-City One, based on a comic strip. A total failure. (1)

Kiss of Death—A gritty, overwrought fable about a man caught between the law and the mob. Simply doesn't jell. (3)

The Last Good Time—Half class, half exploitation. Engaging, poignant portrait of an aging widower who loves his memories and his violin. His relationship with a young girl requires implausible leaps. (4)

Little Odessa—Low-key pace and strong performances combine in this small film about a hit-man from a Russian émigré neighborhood who returns home against the wishes of everyone but his younger brother. (5)

Nine Months—A lark. Hey, it's not perfect, but it captures many of the feelings of a woman and a man when they're expecting or not expecting a baby. Charming and funny. (7)

Rob Roy—Even the best of actors can't save this history epic. The story of Robert Roy MacGregor, 18th century Scottish legend, has its moments. But in the end it has no center, no heart. (4)

The Secret of Roan Inish—A fantasy-legend-story about a young girl who listens to her grandparents' ancient magical tales by the Irish seaside. Beautiful, mystical, and involving. (6)

Species—A sci-fi-horror-exploitation film about a tentacled creature who takes the form of a beautiful young girl in order to mate. Save your money. (1)

While You Were Sleeping—A near perfect dessert. A delightful story about a young woman who saves a man from a subway train, is mistaken for the man's fiancée while he's in a coma, and then falls in love with his brother! It's not profound, but it's a wonderful movie. (9)

Films are rated from an adult FQ perspective on a scale from 1 through 9, based on their sensitivity, integrity, and technique.

The Big M Stands for Mennonite

by Katie Funk Wiebe

On my first trip to Hillsboro, Kansas, after McDonalds had erected its yellow arches on the highway going through town, I headed for the distinctive marker for lunch. A friend introduced me to the manager. I told him I had heard of the Big M presence in this small Mennonite community and had been waiting to check the place out. Ever the public relations diplomat, he welcomed me and jubilantly explained another meaning of the Big M, "M is for all the Mennonites in this community." Business was brisk that day.

...

OVERHEARD: Two Mennonite Brethren were discussing the merger of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church, to be brought to a vote at the July 1995 assembly in Wichita. Asked one of them, "Do you think we should set up a booth outside the convention hall to catch the fallout?"

...

Eschatology occupied a central place in the Mennonite Brethren consciousness in the early decades of this century. Also popular was the production of large charts to use in presentations about the endtimes. William Bestvater, originally from Mountain Lake, Minnesota, and later southern Saskatchewan, was presenting a series of prophetic messages, using his large chart which outlined every detail of the events of the last days. Abraham H. Unruh, a well-known biblical expositor of the Canadian MB Church, was present. After the service he asked good-naturedly, "Brother William, do you think God will consider the outline on your canvases to guide him in carrying out his plans?"

—*Pilgrimage of Faith*, J.B. Toews

...

An article in *Gospel Herald* (January 31, 1995) by Cathleen Hockman points out the numerous references to

Mennonites in contemporary fiction. For example, in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960), one child observes, "They don't have buttons . . . They all got blue eyes . . . and the men can't shave after they marry. Their wives like for 'em to tickle 'em with their beards."

In Helen Martin's, *Tilly: The Mennonite Maid*, the rigid, rather violent father "proves" to the local doctor that automobiles existed in ancient times. "I can prove it right out of the Bible," he says. "The Bible says in so many words, 'There's nothing new under the sun.'"

...

In the early days of the Mennonites in Europe, all efforts to reunite the Frisians (from Holland) and the Flemish (from Flanders) failed. They argued about many things. The Flemish considered the Frisians stolid and slow. The Frisians considered the Flemish worldly. The Flemish liked to tell the story about the Frisian man who rushed onto the train and blurted to the man sitting next to him, "I've got a new Flemish joke to

tell." The man replied, "I am Flemish and so is my wife and my uncle sitting beside me." The Frisian stood perplexed for a moment, then replied, "But I haven't got time to tell it to three people."

...

Margalea Warner of Iowa City, Iowa, gave a meditation at a worship service at the Mennonite Home in Kalona, Iowa, one Sunday. Afterwards a man came up to her and said, "Are you one of the Warners from North Liberty?" She said, "No, how I wish I were." He said, "They're not Mennonites, but they tune pianos." Step No. 1 to becoming a good Mennonite: Learn to tune pianos.



Katie Funk Wiebe, author of many books and articles, is a freelance writer living in Wichita, Kansas.



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Looking Out for No. 1, 2, 3 . . .

by Steven Lewis

A lot of people tilt their heads and ask in that slightly uncomfortable, slightly accusatory voice. "How can you keep track of so many kids?"

They smile teasingly and want to know if I always remember their names, their birth dates, their favorite foods, their homework assignments. (Yes.) Some wonder with a wry smile if we've ever forgotten one of them a la "Home Alone." (Well, sometimes.) Others even have the temerity to ask in a whisper if each of our children has been planned. (No.)

What they really want to know, however, is whether it's possible to love and care for seven children—or, more to the point, whether there's enough love to go around. "Doesn't it all get used up by the time you have two or three (or at most four) kids?" It's not a question, it's a challenge.

I usually smile and make a joke. I tell how I sometimes call one of the kids four or five names before I get to the right one—"Hey, Cael-Nancy-Addie-Clover-what's your name?-Danny, please pass the bread." Or (for the umpteenth time this year) I recount the night we left Clover at the Vermilyes' house and didn't realize it until I counted heads in the van 5 or 10 miles down the road. Or the afternoon when my wife, Patti, forgot that Cael was waiting for a ride at school, and she, Clover, and Nancy went to the mall.

That's what most people want to hear. They certainly don't want a lengthy monologue about logistics of managing children after they outnumber parents three or more to one. They want affirmation that they did the right thing by stopping at one or two or three.

They also want to confirm their suspicions about large families. As charming as the Waltons might have been—or the Bradfords from "Eight Is Enough"—or the Bradys—everyone knows that things are out of control in big families: we're sex-crazed, we're hiding from life behind our children, we're irresponsible, we're arrogant users of the world's resources, and, finally, the only thing that really mat-

ters, we can't possibly provide the love necessary for that many kids.

Yet the truth is that loving your big family is the easy part of having seven kids. In fact, there's nothing even remotely magical or metaphysical about it. It's not like there's a finite amount of parental love doled out to each individual at birth that later gets parceled out among children—or that you have to somehow create precious love out of base metals so that there's enough to go around. Not at all. You simply love every one of your children with all your heart. That's it. Each one gets the same amount of love: your whole heart. (Which is not to say that you like all of them all the time—or even some of the time—you just love them without question.)

Last summer, Cael (25) came home to the Hudson Valley from his home in North Carolina for a quick visit. The same son who couldn't wait to escape the pesty little urchins and his oppressive parents in 1987 to go a thousand miles away to college in Florida bought a cheap flight just to come here for a few days—to see 9-year-old Bay's Little League baseball game; to watch 6-year-old Elizabeth's tap recital; to "chaperone" Danny's 15th birthday party; to pass big brotherly judgment on 17-year-old Clover's boyfriend, Jeffrey; to play a round of golf with the old man; to hang out at the local clubs with Nancy (21) and Addie (20), who had just returned from college; to eat his mother's cooking; to lay back on the couch and watch the Knicks (while Bay and Elizabeth challenged his patience by continually walking in front of the tube).

To be where everyone loves him no matter what.

After the weekend, I admit I was beat. As Cael's visit reminded me, with each additional child the house fills up not just by one but exponentially. It seemed that kids were everywhere, on all three floors of this big house—my kids, someone else's kids, kids I didn't even recognize. There were kids on the porches, kids in the refrigerator, kids in the bathrooms, kids on the phone, kids in my wallet, kids in the woods, kids in

our bed; teen-age boys sneaking a smoke outside the basement door, 6-year-old girls leaving the hose running all night, 17-year-old girls returning empty juice cartons to the refrigerator, grown boys consuming the air, the couch, the TV, the CD, the cold beer, even the floor space in the living room.

There was no escaping all of us. Which is just the point here. A big family is profoundly different from a small or even a regular family (which we experienced for a brief time between 1969 and 1974). In this house, it's never ever about you alone; it's about everyone. Child rearing is not a piece of a grander life scheme; it's not a passage or a phase; it's not even the best part of life. In our time on earth, there will be no neat divisions for Patti and me like the infant and toddler years, then the teen-age years, then the empty nest years, then the grandparenting years. For us, it is everything all at once. There is nothing else out there for us but this big family.

In fact, it is so all-consuming—so inescapable—for me that I have come to understand that all my dreams of fame (vast riches, glorious adventure, etc.) are nothing more than fleeting distractions from the daily task of fathering this extraordinary brood. In the diminishing light of my 49th year, I see clearly that everything comes and everything goes except this vast inescapable family.

In an imploding universe where one must increasingly learn to do it alone, where survival depends upon one's ability to look out solely for No. 1, our children look out for each other. They come home because in a big family someone is always waiting for you.

Steven Lewis writes frequently about raising children and teaches literature and writing at Empire State College in New Paltz, NY.

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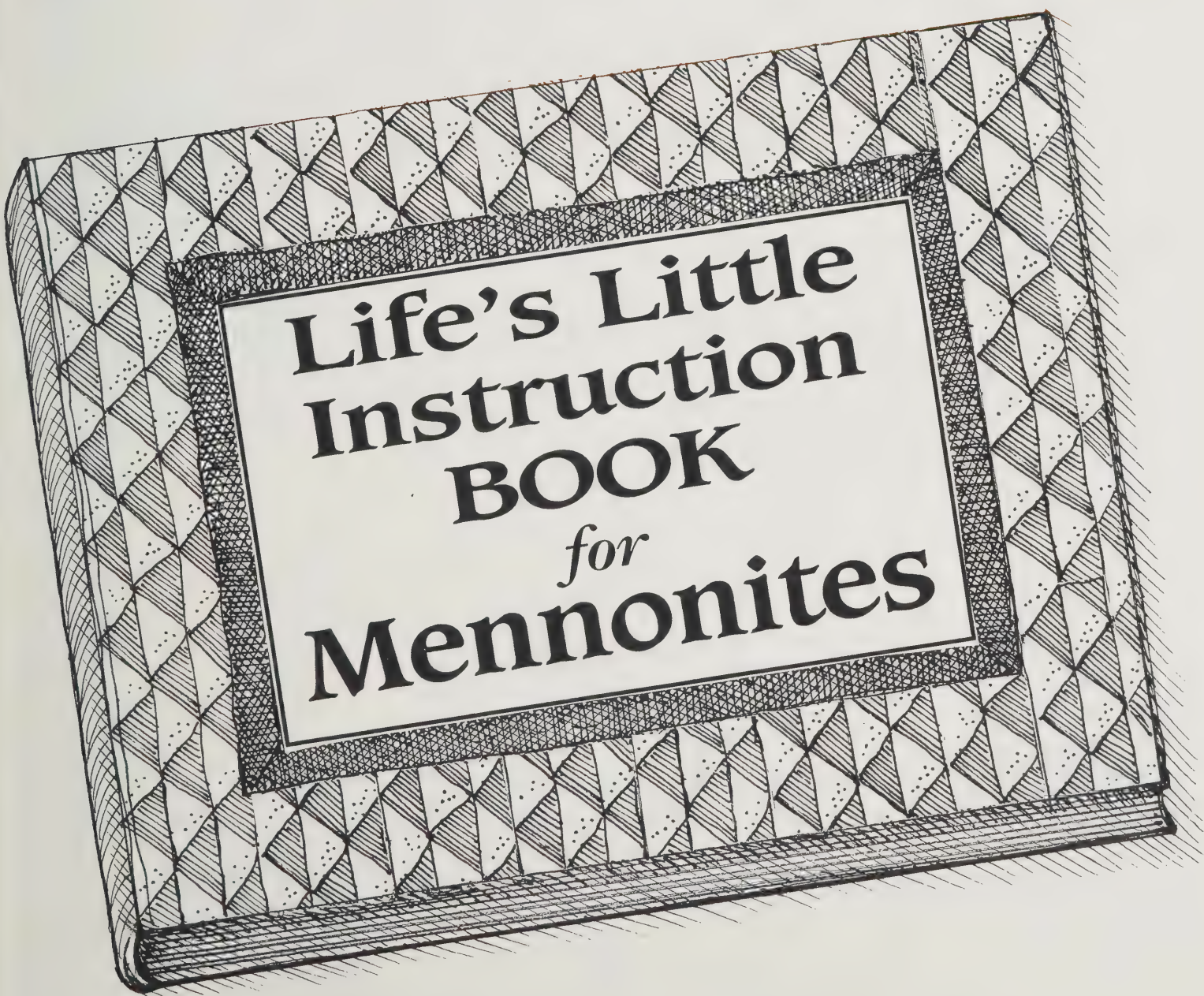
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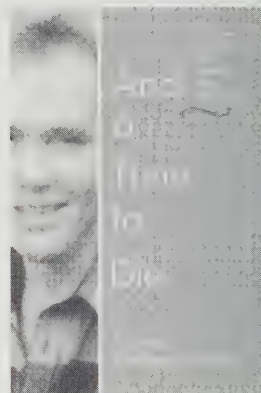
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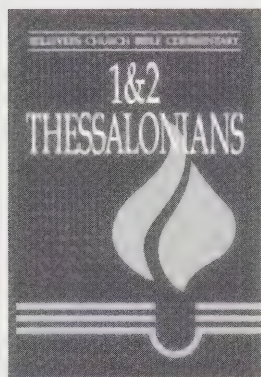
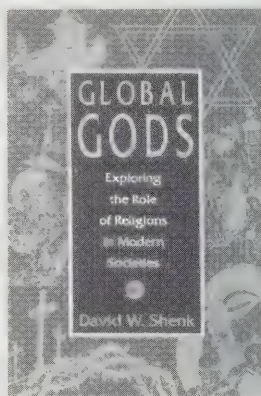
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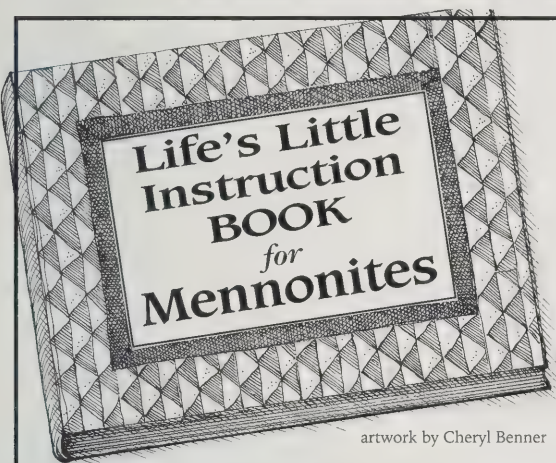
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FESTIVAL

Quarterly



artwork by Cheryl Benner

on the cover . . .

Here are particular instructions for Mennonites who are definitely in, but still only somewhat "of," the world. By Emerson Leshar of *Muppie Manual* fame.

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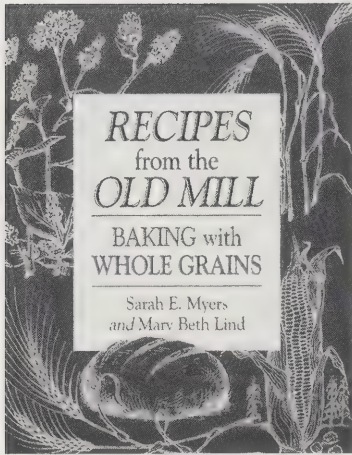
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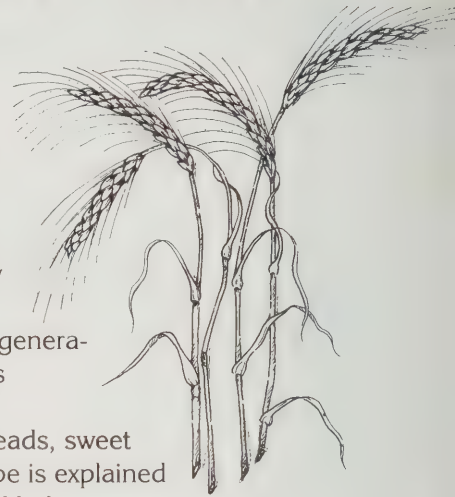


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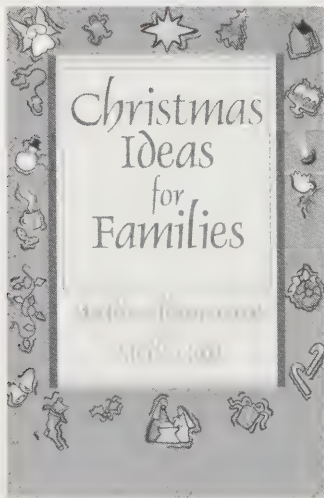
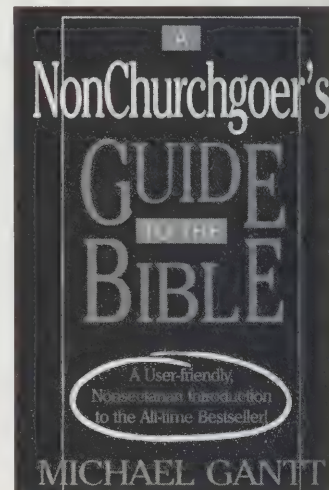
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EDITORIALS

The Gospel Always Wears Human Clothes

We North American Mennonites of Germanic extraction have often felt beset by our Mennonite culture. On the one hand, it has enfolded us, identified us, carried the Gospel to us. On the other hand, it has at times behaved like a stranglehold, closing off our air, whether we yield to it or not. Often we are uneasy and embarrassed about the close comfort this culture has offered us.

That history and those experiences have sometimes tempted us to naive arrogances, the kind that rise out of simmering reactions. For example, we may find ourselves willing to believe that humans can know the Gospel free of cultural apparatus, that any of us can simply choose to slip out of our identifiable gear and experience and express a “pure” Gospel, unencumbered.

We may be convinced that the Gospel we carried beyond our traditional Mennonite community’s borders was basically embodied correctly, in forms that needed to be transmitted as faithfully as the biblical message itself. (Okay, so we were a little too exacting about some dress things, but we had most of it—the music, the worship styles, the organizational methods—right!)

Furthermore, we may see as heresy any adaptations the new churches make in order to have their practices be more locally logical. We might even accuse non-Western churches of “syncretism” when they fuse their faith with their particular culture.

In fact, we may fail to realize that what lies just beyond our traditional Mennonite borders is not neutral territory, but Western, North American turf, as full of particular practices and atti-

tudes and expectations as the Mennonite patterns we tried to escape. If we lay aside our Mennonite peculiarities to live more like the people around us, we’ve simply traded one culture for another.

We may be at least partially delivered from these presumptions and temptations if we pay attention to the lively and growing multiculturalism of our North American churches, and the muscular Mennonite fellowships alive around the world.

These are our sisters and brothers, but they don’t all behave like we do. For we are all beset by the same powerful human difficulty—the need to always express our ideals and abstract ideas concretely, only to find that expression narrowly parochial, limiting, exclusive.

It is a human limitation we can’t escape, but it is one we can confess. We Mennonites have always been persuaded that what we believe is reflected in how we live. That’s a moral understanding. It is, also, implicitly, an acknowledgment that we are all culturally influenced beings, unable to enumerate all the ways in which we behave as products of our specific culture.

It is the very nature of the Gospel to live embodied and incarnated in human beings. It never floats free of human expression. It is always local and particular.

We need discernment rather than a rush of judgment about how we should live the Gospel specifically and appropriately. Perhaps our sisters and brothers from other cultures—American and beyond—can advise us about how to graciously regard the culture in which we live the Gospel.

—PPG

Some Clarifications

First things first. I sincerely apologize to any reader who felt my last editorial was mean-spirited. That was not my attitude, and I’m sorry if my words sounded that way.

A second apology. I’m quite aware that our readers hail from many different Mennonite groups in North America, as well as some from around the world. We also have a fair number

of readers who aren’t Mennonites. My editorial was written out of a MC (Mennonite Church) context, and was probably much too cryptic for persons unaware of the issues and the process.

Having opened the discussion, however, and having received considerable response to my editorial (see “Letters”),

continued on page 6

continued from page 5

I would like to try to state my concerns a bit more understandably, if possible.

1. Most readers would agree that *how* something is done has a great deal to do with what that something eventually ends up *being*.

That has been the heart of my concern these past eight years. I believe that the "progressive" Mennonite groups in North America are facing declining membership, budgets, and institutions. Many other observers agree. But why is this so? What are the underlying problems? Is it inevitable? Or can renewal create a new cohesiveness which will increase membership, vitality, and ministry?

The danger of the two largest progressive Mennonite denominations merging, without renewal, is that such a merger creates the illusion of growth when in fact the groups are in decline. That's why I've always said I wasn't against "integration" as such, but wished the underlying problems and questions would be addressed as part of the process. Such an approach might have led to a renewal among us.

My perception is that the questions are still out there, unanswered. No press release and vote tabulation can change that. (Without any unkindness to members of the Church of the Brethren, it seems worth noting that this sister progressive denomination has lost nearly 30% of its membership during the past generation. Are we on the same track? Isn't this worth discussing openly?)

2. The process among MCs struck me as one-sided and manipulative. I kept waiting for the committee and its staff to truly open up the discussion, and I was stunned when it never happened. Having observed the process very closely from Bethlehem '83 through Wichita '95, I could write a book tracing how this decision was made so "politically correct" that persons with questions had to apologize for raising concerns, and how proponents preempted the vocabulary, set the agenda, dominated the process, and carefully orchestrated public meetings and the church press to their point of view.

As politics go, it was effective. But one hoped for more.

I've always been aware that many persons who favored merger were not very concerned about the process. So

most of them never noticed the unfairness.

Here are several questions which an objective observer might use to test the fairness. A) Was there any official presentation at any of the MC Assemblies where persons who preferred "continued cooperation" instead of formal "merger" were featured in a presentation to the Assembly? Not to my knowledge. Conversely, most of the presentations included only persons highly enthused about integration. B) Why did persons who raised concerns about integration receive immediate rebuttal to their point of view, whether at delegate sessions or in print, whereas proponents (in my observation at Normal, Oregon, Philadelphia, and Wichita) were not rebutted by either the staff or the committee? C) Why was a "balanced budget amendment" approach adopted, to use a U.S. political parallel—pass the resolution with no specifics, no timetable, and no tabulation of the price to be paid. Once passed, the people will have to accept the "bitter medicine," because they've already agreed to the resolution. D) It struck me repeatedly that a tone was set throughout the process that persons with concerns felt obliged to support a merger if it passed, even though they did not prefer it, but persons in favor of integration seldom or never pledged themselves to drop the push for merger if the resolution did not pass ("We'll just keep voting until it passes," was a common comment.)

These are just several general measuring sticks which an objective observer could use to evaluate fairness. Many more specific examples could be listed.

3. The rush to psychoanalyze persons with concerns left many of us amazed and irritated. Those cautious on integration were clearly "afraid of GCs," or "naive," or "unsupportive of the church." Why were proponents not called "fearful" and those with cautions called "courageous"? On any other issues where these same analyzers would have themselves been cautious about some major proposal, would they have accepted the labels of "fearful, naive, and unsupportive" about themselves?

4. This magazine has always been inter-Mennonite. That means we wish to learn from and foster appreciation for all the groups in our faith family, from

the GCs to the MBs, from the Old Orders to the urban house churches, from the farmers to the artists, from India to Zaire to Guatemala.

I personally have not appreciated the repeated accusations that persons who have had cautions about a GC/MC merger are clearly not inter-Mennonite in spirit. If someone proposed a merger of the GCs and the MBs, would everyone who raised questions or cautions be "afraid of MBs" and "not inter-Mennonite" in spirit?

5. Enough said. I don't plan to write a book. I have no interest in prolonging this. The vote was taken. Integration is the order of the day.

What has made me sad all along is that an orchestrated vote does not make the underlying questions go away, does not necessarily lead to renewal, and may plant seeds which we will have to live with for at least a generation. Nevertheless, what's done is done, and I plan to continue to support the church, and to exercise my privilege of raising questions when I have concerns. —MG

LETTERS

As an *FQ* subscriber I am deeply disappointed by both the tone and the content of your editorial, "Merger (by a Squeak)." Your opposition to integration has been clear from the beginning. The video, "Exploring Integration," provided a convenient forum in which your views were clearly and forcefully presented across the Mennonite Church.

The "squeak," or 6% margin above the required 67%, represents 73 of 100 Mennonite Church delegates voting their consciences for the unity God has given in Jesus Christ. Are you prepared to belittle or deny the substantial majority which this vote represents?

But more than the mere mechanics, I am troubled by the negative attitude obvious in the editorial. It literally drips with distrust and anger, almost slandering church leaders and brotherly process.

I have the greatest respect for churchmen like Erv Stutzman who clearly committed themselves to working for the unity of the church, regardless of how the vote on integration came out. I am sorry that *FQ* cannot take a similar stance. One could hope for more objectivity and fewer sour grapes.

Robert Hartzler
Freeman, South Dakota

With a bit of sorrow, I have decided to allow my subscription to *Festival Quarterly* to come to an end.

Probably for two reasons. When I first subscribed several years ago, I found the issues quite interesting. Although I am not a practicing Mennonite, it is obvious from my name that I have a Mennonite background and I like to keep up with what is going on in the Mennonite world. Somehow, I hate to say it, the issues I have received the past year or so, are not quite as interesting as they seemed at the beginning. I find myself reading less and less of the magazine.

But I guess the final "straw," was your column, "Merger (by a Squeak)." To me it was mean-spirited, and I could not believe that a real Mennonite wrote it. I just felt that I could no longer be part of a readership of a magazine with such a mean-spirited editor. Since I am not, as I said, a practicing Mennonite, the merger should be moot to me, but somehow it isn't.

Sorry, but I will not be reading your magazine in the future.

Menno Duerksen
Germantown, Tennessee

I was very disappointed in your editorial about the vote on integration at Wichita '95. The editorial seems very unfair to me.

When for every MC delegate who voted no, there were three who voted yes, I fail to see how you consider that passing by a "squeak." If the MC vote would have been yes 67.3 percent, in other words, passed by a margin of .6 percentage points, then I would have understood a "squeak" terminology. When candidates run for political office and receive a 73 percent victory, they speak of it in terms of a strong mandate or even a landslide.

I was also disappointed that you didn't make reference to the margin of vote on the General Conference side. I wonder why you disregarded that?

I'm not sure what membership statistics you are using for MCs and GCs. I think that the Mennonite Church General Board office now uses 100,000 for Mennonite Church. Before the integration of Pacific Southwest and Pacific Northwest Mennonite conferences, the General Conference U.S. membership was 33,629. Assuming that the MC delegates reflected the Mennonite Church, then it would appear that about 26,600

MCs would be opposed.

Now that a commitment has been made by both Mennonite Church and General Conference to move towards integration, my hope is that all MCs and GCs will do the best they can to make it work. And I would like to ask that also for you and the *Festival Quarterly*.

Vern Preheim
General Secretary
General Conference Mennonite
Church, Newton, Kansas

I read your recent editorial "Merger (by a Squeak)" with sadness and some anger. Anger that you have the audacity to suggest that "the cards" were somehow stacked against those who opposed merger. The truth is, that for this vote, special provisions were made that we would not use the simple majority vote, which we generally do, but rather a two-thirds majority vote. The truth of the matter is that over 73% of Mennonites and 93% of the General Conference Mennonites voted in favor of this merger. You have taken numbers and made them say what you want them to say. My hunch is that had all Mennonites in North America been asked to vote, the percentage of those voting in favor of merger would have been even larger.

I also take offense at your accusing the church leaders of "bulldozer presentations, hard-ball politics and less-than-candid infomercials," and "manipulation and unfairness in church life." Those statements are uncalled for as well as untrue. For some of us who favor the merger, we have been frustrated with leadership not taking a stronger position, providing clearer direction towards merger.

Yes, I agree that it seems at this time the Canadians appear to be creating their own Canadian Mennonite Church. However, having recently moved from Canada after nearly 7 years there, I understand how Canadians feel they are never heard, and that they perceive the issues are always based on a U.S. agenda. I do feel there is a need for Canadian Mennonites to get together from time to time to discuss issues that pertain to them. I hope and pray that this can still be done within the confines of one North American Mennonite Church. As far as I know there has been no decision on this. In fact, there have been no decisions made on the merger other than it will happen.

I would hope you could find it within yourself to continue in the dialogue helping to bring shape to the New Emerging Mennonite Church. No, not everything will go as you or as I would wish, but that's part of what it means to be part of the community of faith; continuing to walk together, struggling with faith and how it is to be lived out even though we don't always agree or see things the same. I can tell you that life, the church, and issues of faith look very different from San Francisco than they did from Calgary, Alberta. They also look very different from here than they do from southern Michigan, where I grew up. I'm sure they look different still from Lancaster. The thing we all need to keep in mind is that what I think best from my perspective may not be what is best for the wider Church; hence for the sake of the body I concede my preferred position.

I am sorry and sad you feel so angry about the outcome of all this, but I'm more concerned that you don't become bitter. As we have seen in the history of the Mennonite Church, those leaders who have become bitter because things didn't go their way have lost effectiveness. They soon turned against everything that was attempted and never offered any positive alternatives. In the end it becomes more of an issue of power than of substance.

I know you make your living in marketing tradition, attempting to preserve and keep things as they are. Being a history major in college I appreciate that. But we do not live in history. We make history. To continually attempt to live with a nostalgic and romanticized eye to the past is to fail to live in the reality of today, having dreams and visions, making plans for the future.

We all need to remember there's a bigger world out there with all kinds of people with whom we need to learn to interact, stretch, and be stretched by. The truth is that the majority of people in the U.S., yet alone the world, never heard of Mennonites and couldn't care less. We don't share our unique understanding of theology by staying cloistered in Mennonite communities. I sense that your life has become too entrenched in the Mennonite world. My sadness about this is that as a person who has so much to offer the Mennonite Church through the arts, you would choose to remain focused on Mennonite arts rather than helping

Mennonites see how the arts can enrich their lives.

I do hope that you can find healing, comfort, and joy as we together envision the church of the future.

God Bless!

John A. Miller
San Francisco, California

We are very disappointed to read your recent editorial on the Merger (by a Squeak). We feel that the merger will be for the better!

There are fears in your writing. My experience has been that there are fewer differences with MC and GC. Rejoice!!

Darvin Luginbuhl
Bluffton, OH

A 6% squeak? Come on a red dy! Such malaprop could get your poetic license revoked. Outside of *Festival Quarterly* a 73 to 27 vote is recognized as a 46 percentage point margin. A squeak would be a 51% vote, maybe 52%. Even where a simple majority is sufficient, six points over the deciding mark constitutes an unsqueaky 12-point margin.

When constitutional amendments and church unity are in view, voting is regularly handicapped in favor of the status quo, a deliberate protection against squeaky majorities. Thus our "manipulative" leaders urged the two-thirds standard to block integration in the absence of a strong mandate otherwise. On something as complex as integration, even a 67% vote would have been a remarkable achievement.

That still leaves room for skepticism on whether integration will deliver the promised land. Certainly, arguments were overdrawn—on both sides. An integrated church will still be peopled and led by redeemed sinners. John Willems' "beyond our wildest dreams" comment, I believe, was not so much a promise as it was a testimony about actual integration experience in the Pacific Northwest—which had many reasons to doubt whether GCs and MCs could come together.

I respect your concerns and trust they will be heard in the further development of integration details. But I am sorry your grief caused you to denigrate the almost 3 to 1 agreement of the MC delegate body, a rather down-to-earth and prayerful bunch of Mennonites from all over North America.

Gordon Zook
Newport News, Virginia

I have just read your editorial concerning the merger at Wichita '95. I simply want to respond with several points. 1) 73% of the Mennonite Church in fact voted for integration as against 27% who did not. While it is true there are a large number who are not in favor, it was not a "squeak" as you seemed to indicate in your article.

2) The vote on the Confession of Faith passed overwhelmingly in both the General Conference and the Mennonite Church. If there were any move to the "left," surely it would have shown up in concerns about a common Confession of Faith, but it did not. It seems to me that the concerns regarding integration have more to do with institution, tradition, and invested interests, and I would also say that these same concerns and invested interests are as strong here in Newton as they are anywhere else in the Mennonite Church. This was not an easy vote for many General Conference people in this area.

3) It felt to me as a pastor that we as congregations were more than once invited to respond with our concerns, concerning the integration discussion. For many of us it felt like six years was enough time to give serious consideration to this issue. We did not feel manipulated by the committee; however you may have had experiences that I did not have.

4) Unity movements are indeed, as you state, no guarantee of "success" or "numbers" or "successful budgets," but surely they are right because of Christ's call that we would be unified as a proper witness to those around us.

5) If we in the Wichita area would have had to report to the Wichita community that we could not agree to come together, it would have been an embarrassing statement or message to this community who saw and reported every day the activities of these peace congregations who were working in "Blitz Build" in building 20 houses. Somehow the sense that we could agree to come together, while it is not a perfect decision that will heal all our problems, can only be the right one given our witness as people of peace.

6) I do not know how we could have communicated with our own 4,000 plus youth a message that we could not agree to come together. Certainly we as adults in the church give leadership to what is true and faithful, but our youth

do have great difficulty understanding these divisions of the past.

7) I am not sure where your strong sense of unfairness by the leaders of this discussion comes from. As I said before, you may have to enlighten me here on some things that have happened that I am not aware of; that certainly may be the case. Our experience here with persons who were leading in this discussion, and one of them is a member of our congregation, was that when they were challenged, they did make every attempt to take seriously the concerns that we have, and many persons in our congregations do have concerns about integration.

I do appreciate your forthrightness in stating what you feel about this issue and respect your opinion very highly. I simply wanted to respond in my own feelings.

Earl Sears
Newton, Kansas

Your editorial in the last *Festival Quarterly*, "Merger (by a Squeak)," left me with a feeling of unease. That disquietude persists and so I must write.

As the publisher of a quarterly that has a readership that embraces many Mennonite groups and beyond, you conveyed to me the impression that some of us may be of a lesser order of theological commitment. I like to think that the General Conference has strengths and gifts that will complement those of the Mennonite Church; at the same time I look forward to the strengths and gifts we shall receive in return.

I distance myself from those who speak triumphantly and in utopian terms. A major step in a long series of steps—but hardly a revolution. Although I have participated in some of our conference discussions on integration, I have not been aware of the expansive claims and unfair tactics ascribed to proponents. Persisting stereotypical distortions on both sides, yes, but many of these can be diminished by getting to know each other better.

I would be pleased if sometime soon you could express yourself editorially in a way that suggests hope and promise, some encircling affection that draws us together and helps us transcend our lesser selves.

Robert Kreider
North Newton, Kansas



WHICH CULTURE?

And Where Does the Gospel Reside?

by Linda Yoder

Editor's Note: How do one's faith and the culture in which one lives intermingle? If one's faith is expressed in how one lives, then how is one's culture appropriately a part of that?

Missionaries from the West did not take a "pure" Gospel to the places they served. The "good news" was always borne in Western ways.

Today, many of the fellowships throughout the world which began through the efforts of these missionaries are working to understand how to appropriately express their faith in their own particular settings. Shedding the Western ways that accompanied the Gospel's delivery to them and fitting it to their own world, but without compromising the essence of the "good news," is their task.

Linda Yoder of Morgantown, West Virginia, witnessed an occasion in Indonesia where this issue played just beneath the surface of a Mennonite community's celebration.

Music sounds from the traditional Javanese percussion orchestra known as the *gamelan*. A handsome bare-chested male dancer makes his way down the aisle through the audience. On his head are gilt ornaments. Embroidered sashes, satin pants, and a batik sarong complete his garb.

Two men follow him with staves. Another comes along with a yellow-lined parasol, always an indication of royalty. The men carry a *tumpang*, a heavy mound of yellow rice, seasoned, decorated, ready to eat. A procession of serious-looking men follow, arrayed in batik sarongs whose intricate patterns have been made the same way for centuries, as well as satin jackets, black leather slippers, and batik headcloths folded in traditional ways. Stuck in the back of the cummerbund of each man is a *kris*, a wavy-bladed dagger.

Who are these coming to the altar? They are a Mennonite congregation in Java, a part of the Indonesian Mennonite Church, Gereja Kristen Muria Indonesia (GKMI), located in a place where highly westernized worship services are the norm. They are celebrating the



27th anniversary of their denominational magazine—*Berita GKMI* (GKMI News)—in Sola Gratia, a new church building in Semarang, Indonesia. I felt indeed blessed to be there, because, as I found out later, this was the first of what they refer to as “contextualized” services, a worship service that makes a studied attempt to include the richness of local cultural expressions, in all their symbolic power.

Later I asked Paulus Sugeng Wijaya, General Secretary of the synod (conference), about why they had planned this contextualized service. Is there a definition of the word “contextualization”? No, there’s not a definition yet, he said, “because we’re in the beginning of that process.” The Catholic church here uses the term “inculturation.” As a partial definition, the GKMI leaders offer this: “A reaction against westernizing the church.”

“Why are you doing this now?” I asked.

“Because churches are more and more westernized. Two years ago I went to a church in a village of Javanese people in Sumatra. They had an electric band. This saddened me. Many people think western culture is Christian culture,” explained Paulus.

How was the contextualized service received? I wondered. I asked Mesach Krisetya, Moderator of the synod. “Some people think spirituality is always tainted by the culture of the local people,” Pak Mesach said. (“Pak” is a title of respect, used for a man). People say, “What are you doing there!” Inevitably, someone levels the accusation—“syncretism.” That deadly practice happens when Christianity becomes so blended with culture that it loses its essence. And yet, whenever people come to faith, they come with all that they are—and that includes culture.

In the words of Korean theologian Chung Hyun Kyung: “It is inevitable to express our faith with the form we already have when we receive the Gospel. You, too, are a syncretist, but you do not admit it.” Look at the development of early Christianity—it did not come from a vacuum. It was expressed through the medium of Hebrew and Hellenistic cultures. Gospel music, pianos and choirs, black robes or coats and ties for pastors, stained glass windows—these are elements of western syncretism.

People who charge “syncretism” usually imply that there is something demonic in the local culture. In Indonesia, this feeling seems to be more pronounced among the church leadership, who pass that on to their congregations. The electric band, becoming more popular in Indonesia as an accompaniment to long periods of repetitive gospel music, raises the issue in a slightly different way. As an intrusive element of western culture, shouldn’t it be subject to the same scrutiny as elements of local culture? “I don’t oppose electric bands, of course,” Pak Paulus said, “but if a pastor opposes using local culture, I ask him or her why this choice and why not traditional culture? I want to give people a choice.

“Liturgy is a means of expression—it has to do with the expressive aspect of people. If I express my feeling to God using what is *strange* to me, how can I really express

it? If we use *Western* liturgy, how does this express *our* feeling? What we have is only a worship *program*—it is not expression.”

Pak Mesach himself has quite a different concern—spectacularism. Such a service as the anniversary service described above is too spectacular, too luxurious, he believes. Everyone is dressed up in luxurious outfits (even though they are rented from local wedding designers). The clothes and the symbols of power such as the yellow parasol are elements taken from *kraton* culture, the culture of the sultan’s palace and of hierarchy.

Yet the innovators among the synod leadership prefer this direction at this time. The parasol, gong, incense, and bamboo drum all have deep meanings to people in Java. They reproduce the *gunung*, or mountain emblem, in many forms, such as this celebration’s rice mound and a particular stylized representation that signifies the cosmos. For people on this island, this instantly recognizable mountain form expresses male strength, power, courage, security, and a sense of wholeness. Each batik design on the handmade sarongs speaks of an element of culture in a visual language that people are accustomed to reading. The Javanese shadow puppet is almost synonymous with Javanese culture. It brings to people’s minds traditional stories in which puppets illuminate principles of religious life such as loyalty, purity, obedience, service, and solidarity.

All these elements, and many more, can express a theology that reflects the Javanese inner experience. Ceremonies are taken seriously here: burial, commemoration of the dead, marriage, and birth, for example. In the words of Father Sebastian, a Javanese priest in a contemplative order, “We want to sanctify every event that happens during the life span of human beings.”

My friend Stefanus Haryono is a probationary pastor, just at the point of being ordained as a new pastor in the Mennonite congregation at Pati. He is planning his ordination service to include Javanese elements that he believes will speak to his congregation. “I want to show that values of the Christian faith can also be dug out of Javanese culture. This will enrich theological values.” So his processional music won’t use “Halleluia,” but “*Corobalen*,” a Javanese word from the processional used in royal ceremonies. In this procession, two women dancers will represent the presence of angels—angels in Javanese costume. And why not? The Bible doesn’t tell us anything about the clothes of angels. Westerners have simply been conditioned to view angels through western Renaissance painters’ eyes.

The angels will strew jasmine blossoms throughout the church, symbolizing purity and forgiveness. Pak Stefanus is committed to contextualizing the Gospel in Indonesia. “It bothers me to preach in the village with a coat and tie. Village people will see me as a stranger. I prefer to use batik.” But there is one more complication in this story. Stefanus himself is not Javanese, but Chinese, in ancestry. And this is the case with most of the members of the GKMI Synod.

This aspect intrigues me. Why have these Mennonites chosen to use Javanese elements but not



Cheryl Helmuth-Logan

Chinese elements in their worship? I asked both Pak Mesach and Pak Paulus why. "Because I prefer to call myself Indonesian," Pak Paulus said. "But you point to a problem. We do not belong to the Chinese culture, but we do not belong to the Javanese culture either. Because of all this confusion, many congregations simply rely on Western elements, but I think that is not the answer."

Explains Pak Mesach, "We are Indonesian. We were raised in Java with the culture of Java. We live here, even though our skin and our eyes and our food may be different. And that's why we want to show that the Javanese elements should be merged in our culture."

Yet the Javanese culture of village and palace art seem to many urbanized young people to be irrelevant and boring. One theological student said, "When I can't sleep, I turn on *gamelan* music on my radio. It's so boring it puts me to sleep right away."

Daniel Listijabudi, a fifth-year theological student at Duta Wacana Christian University, challenges a concept of contextualization that relies entirely upon Javanese elements of culture. "We must be sure what is the real culture." If we want to be truly contextualized, he says, we have to understand our own mixed culture.

For example, he believes that people should feel touched by the music in their church experience. If a young person is touched by Western culture and music, that is a part of his or her culture. Digging into old Javanese culture, making the *wayang* live again—this is not contextualization in its most genuine sense. If we don't take pains to understand the mixed nature of the mainstream of our culture, Daniel says, we're guilty of Western-style either-or thinking.

"Think of the yin and the yang. In Indonesian, *baik ini maupun ini*—'this as well as that.' I don't say that Western culture is necessarily youth culture. It's like yin and yang. So this is our creative homework, to know the mainstream of our culture, to know how mixed it really is.

"When I stop to consider the *gamelan* and *wayang* and other elements, I see that the common thread is story. Narrative. Story is still alive, as compared with the *gamelan*. Even for young people, story is something that is still alive." This broader view, he claims, represents a genuine contextualization.

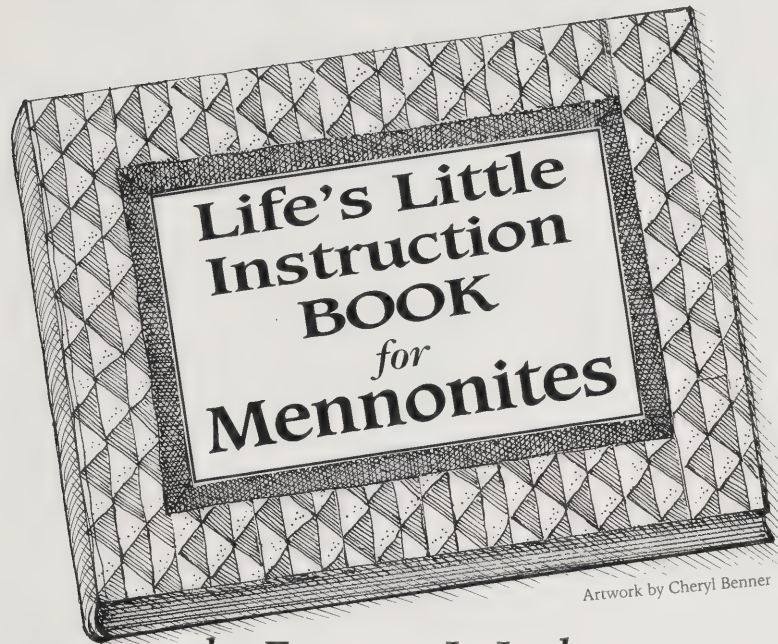
Now the anniversary service is over, and jasmine blossoms are being swept up from the floor of this very new, very untraditional Mennonite church building in Semarang. China dinner plates have been passed around to the congregation on the lower level, and people have shared the yellow rice, fragrant with coconut milk and spicy with red chilies, chicken chunks, and shallot crisps. This yellow rice mountain, to people in Java, means sharing, wholeness, and celebration. It makes the occasion complete as it makes the people one.

Linda Yoder recently returned from a seven-month assignment as a team leader, along with her husband, Del, of a Youth Discovery Team for Mennonite Central Committee. The team traveled throughout Asia and North America.

Yoder teaches literature at West Virginia University. She has also taught literature at Gadjra Mada University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.



Life's Little Instruction Book for Mennonites



by Emerson L. Lesher

Mennonites have always prided (and I use that word unashamedly, since 1990s Mennonites can do that) themselves as being a people of the "third way." They have held to the important theological position that truth isn't to the left or the right, but rather somewhere down the middle, or sometimes in a different ballpark. Mennonites have historically not taken the first or second door offered them, but have usually waited until the third door. It's not because they are slower or dumber; it's just their way.

H. Jackson Brown, Jr. wrote a best selling book entitled *Life's Little Instruction Book* which we will refer to as the first way. It was very popular and could be considered an instruction book for the sensible worldly way. It offered much helpful advice.

However, Charles Sherwood Dane, author of *Life's Little Destruction Book*, believed there was a second way not spoken to by Brown. Dane thought Jackson's

book encouraged an unchecked pursuit of perfection and so offered an alternative. Dane's book is unfortunately a sarcastic, skeptical, and reactionary book (sadly this type of book has increased in frequency and generally reflects a downward course in religious commitment). It does not really point one in a new and positive direction.

Here is where I think Mennonites should enter the debate and make a contribution. It is a golden opportunity for Mennonites to get a best selling book and advance what they believe makes up the "good life."

Jackson's subtitle is "511 suggestions, observations, and reminders on how to live a happy and rewarding life." Dane's subtitle is "512 boorish, insensitive, and socially obnoxious pointers for leading a simple, self-centered life." We propose that the Mennonite third way subtitle might read, "Only a few hundred humble, subtle, and

truthful disciplines and guidelines on how to live a consistent, unassuming, and faithful life." Here, then, are some instructions to be included in *Life's Little Instruction Book for Mennonites*.

1. Be peaceful with at least three people every day.



2. Never burn shoo-fly pie; keep the bottom wet.

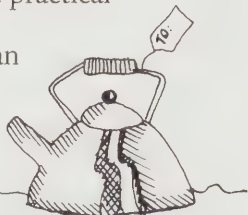


3. Always act like you have less money than you really have.

4. Always be subtle and unassuming.
5. Ask forgiveness rather than permission.



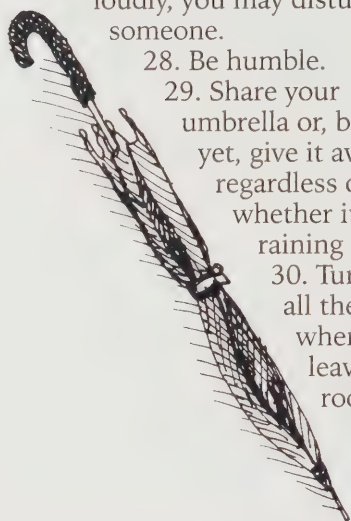
6. Whistle only in the barn.
7. Don't complain about your relative until you're on the way home.
8. Avoid unnecessary similes.
9. Never argue with your bishop, at least when he's around.
10. Resist any temptations to be rich and/or famous.
11. Be careful in all things.
12. Never hit anyone.
13. Get to know a good Mennonite plumber, electrician, and carpenter.
14. Watch out for Mennonite attorneys.
15. Buy only black cars.
16. Watch the song leader at all times.
17. Never make others feel conceited or contribute to their getting a big head.
18. Always give practical gifts and ones that can be returned.



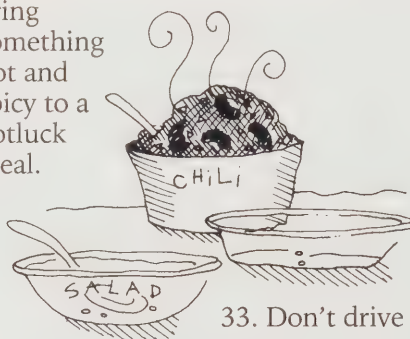
19. Always sing your part—and do it loudly.
20. As an act of service, always allow others to take your parking space.
21. Give the shirt or blouse off your back.
22. Make sure you give more to others than they give to you.
23. Always remember who is related to whom.



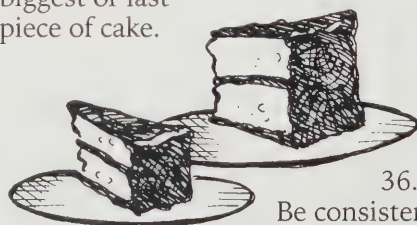
24. Don't ask impolite or embarrassing questions.
25. Support Mennonite farmers—buy real dairy products.
26. Always try to let the other person be right.
27. Don't ring the doorbell too loudly, you may disturb someone.
28. Be humble.
29. Share your umbrella or, better yet, give it away, regardless of whether it is raining or not.
30. Turn out all the lights when leaving a room.



31. Wash your feet before feet washing services.
32. Don't bring something hot and spicy to a potluck meal.



33. Don't drive your newest car to church.
34. Always be last in line.
35. Never take the biggest or last piece of cake.



36. Be consistent in all things.
37. Always know the weather forecast.
38. Don't buy plastic when you can buy recyclable glass or paper.
39. Always be ready to join MDS.

40. Never cheer when an opponent strikes out in church softball.
41. Don't chew gum during a sermon.
42. Don't sing with your mouth full.
43. No shirt, no shoes, no sermon.
44. Be a good neighbor; always mow at least three yards over your property line.
45. Don't cast the first stone, or the second stone.
46. Don't be cynical and sarcastic.
47. Be suspicious of successful people.
48. Choose to lose.
49. Never tell someone they are humble.
50. Teach your children to be humble and perfect.
51. Respect traditions, especially the ones that you like.

Emerson Lesher is author of The Muppie Manual. He is also president of Messiah Village, a retirement community near Mechanicsburg, PA.

*Good Books has invited me to consider authoring a book entitled Life's Little Instruction Book for Mennonites. In the true spirit of community(!) I welcome any "instructions" you have that I could include in such a collection. Please send them to my attention, Emerson Lesher, Good Books, P.O. Box 419, Intercourse, PA 17534 or Fax at 717/768-3433. I should have your submissions by **January 10, 1996**. If any of your submissions are chosen for the book, you will receive a free copy of the book (submissions must be original, of course). Thanks!*

Family Reunion

by Ivan J. Kauffman

There was nothing unusual about our having a family reunion this summer. Several hundred Mennonite and Amish families held reunions this summer—perhaps more. But every family has a story, and they are all worth telling.

The Conrads have had a reunion every five years since 1965, when Eda and Orie Conrad invited their eight children and their families back to Oregon for a visit to the seacoast where they had vacationed each summer after harvest. There were about 45 of us at that first reunion—the eight children, their spouses, and the grandchildren.

Thirty years later we number 113. Orie and Eda have died, and one of the eight children died suddenly last fall. One grandchild died in an automobile accident a few years ago. But 28 grandchildren are now married and to date they and their spouses have given birth to 43 great-grandchildren. Where there was once a single family there are now 34 families.

The family has met three times in Oregon, but also in Indiana, California, and Washington, D.C. This year we are back in Oregon. We spend two days at the coast, then two more at the family farm, which is now owned by one of the grandsons. There is a big family dinner in the backyard and a reception on Sunday afternoon for the community.

What is unusual about this summer's reunion is the turnout. We are now scattered across the United States, from Massachusetts to Hawaii. Two of the cousins live abroad. But despite the extensive travel required, someone from 32 of the 34 families is here. Of the 113 persons who could have come,

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Orie story.*

93 actually were there. It would have been 97 except that Peter and Amy had to stay home in Denver to give birth to number 114. Her name is Emily.

The two people who started all this were a typical Amish Mennonite couple much like several thousand others. Eda wore a covering and Orie a white shirt without a necktie. They were both descended from 16th century Swiss Anabaptist families who had become Amish in the 17th century and had taken refuge in Alsace in the 18th century. After the Napoleonic Wars in the 19th cen-

tury their great-grandparents had immigrated to America. Their grandparents had moved west later in the century, and their parents had become Mennonite around the turn of the century.

Eda Zehr was the great-granddaughter of Dr. Peter Zehr, the pioneer Amish bishop in Waterloo County, Ontario. Family oral tradition says he attended the University of Paris. He was a member of the Royal College of Physicians in Ontario. Eda's grandmother had emigrated to Nebraska and that is where Eda was born in 1901. Her parents moved to Oregon when she was 12.

Orie Conrad was the great-great-grandson of Bishop Martin Conrad who led the Amish community in Montbeliard, France through the terrible crisis of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. Orie's grandfather, Martin H. Conrad, was a pioneer settler in Iowa. Orie's father came to Oregon in the 1880s as a homesteader, and Orie was born there in 1896.

Orie and Eda met at Hesston College. There were married in 1920 and lived their entire lives as farmers near Albany, Oregon. They had nine living children. Reuben died when he was seven. The other eight all went to Hesston for at least their senior year in high school. Seven of the eight attended Goshen College. The other graduated from the nursing school at the Mennonite Hospital in La Junta, Colorado. All married other Mennonites and had children. Five have remained Mennonite.

Most of Orie and Eda's grandchildren went to college and now live in urban locations. Many have graduate degrees. Thirteen of the 31 are Mennonite, but only six have married other Mennonites. Several have married Catholics.

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embarrassed
us.*

One is exploring Eastern religions.

The family now looks a lot like white middle-class America. The visual differences which 40 years ago would have set us apart—the un-stylish clothing, the simple hairstyles, the absence of neckties, jewelry, and makeup—are no longer there. But still there is something different here, something which keeps drawing us together even though we live in a culture which pulls us apart.

Whatever that force is, it has something to do with the Orie story. Whenever we get together someone always tells it—now that Orie's dead. When he was alive, we always hesitated asking him to tell it because it brought tears to his eyes and that embarrassed us. Orie was a strong man.

The story is this: Orie was drafted in World War I and sent to Camp Lewis, Washington. As his Amish ancestors had for the past 400 years, he refused induction. Since there were no provisions for conscientious objectors during World War I, he was assigned to a group of young men who had volunteered for the war.

The volunteers immediately set out to force this young pacifist to conform. First they stole his clothing so that he was forced to wear a uniform. Then they started pulling him from bed at night and forced him under hot and cold showers. When that did not break his will, they took him from the barracks one night, put him on a horse-drawn wagon, and drove him to a secluded place in the woods. There they placed a noose around his neck.

Just as they were preparing to drive the wagon away, leaving Orie to hang to death, a military policeman came by and rescued him. Orie was then sent to another

camp which had a special contingent for C.O.s, and he spent the rest of the war there. The members of the lynch party were court-martialed. Orie always said the hardest part of the whole ordeal was having to testify against them at the court martial. He never mentioned them by name.

This year one of Orie's grandsons who is a Mennonite lawyer told the story. He phrases it for the children, hoping to pass it on to the fourth generation. Even those of us who have heard the story numerous times listen carefully. The further we get from this

story in time, the more clear it is that we all have been deeply marked by it.

After the story has been told, we have an auction. Twenty or 30 miscellaneous items left behind by Orie and Eda are offered. The money will be used to plan the next reunion in the year 2000. We are all surprised at how high the bidding goes. An old copy of *Life Songs No. 2* brings \$25, many times its original cost. The successful bidder is one of the Catholic cousins. There's clearly something here the 20- and 30-something generations want to hold on to.

After the program many of us say we are uncomfortable that we never tell any Eda stories. It's not that we don't know her stories, but for some reason they don't get told the way Orie's war story does.

Eda's stories are also about life and death. They start with the terrible illness she suffered as an infant. She was in such great pain she had to be carried around on a pillow for weeks. It was probably meningitis. Whatever it was, it left her nearly deaf. Later in childhood she also had rheumatic fever, which left her with a badly damaged heart.

When she was in the first grade, her teachers thought she was mentally handicapped because she wasn't learning. So in the second grade her parents sent her to Iowa to a boarding school for disturbed children. There the staff discovered she was deaf. They taught her sign language, in English of course, and sent her back to her German-speaking home. She could hear some sounds and she later learned lip-reading. She was so good at it you often forgot she was deaf. She

There
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often said that when she got to heaven she would sing.

After her marriage at age 19, there were constant pregnancies—more than a dozen in 16 years. One child died in the womb and there were several miscarriages. It was later discovered she had a negative blood type. All this put a heavy strain on her damaged heart. When she became pregnant again just two months after her ninth birth, there was fear for her life. Her doctor strongly urged her to have an abortion, but she decided to give birth once more. The child which was born is now my wife.

Eda was strong, both physically and mentally, but there was also a deep inner strength. She possessed a quiet but indomitable spirit that everyone knows about, but which we don't seem to know how to talk about. Perhaps it's because Eda herself talked so little. Because of her deafness her verbal skills were limited. Telling stories was especially difficult for her.

But despite that, you always knew what she was thinking. Her lifelong suffering had made her gentle and clear, and she had come to a deep appreciation for the power of beauty. She had made a decision to focus on what was good in her life, not on what was wrong, and she taught us all to do the same. That positive outlook continues to bring us together as much as her husband's moral courage.

This family has not led a charmed existence. Every catastrophe which can strike has wounded us at one time or another. We are together not because we have somehow escaped the problems which destroy so many other families, but because we have been

able to stay together and support each other when these tragedies have struck. We learned that from Eda. There is a feminine courage here, a kind of power we don't have an adequate name for.

The evening we had the auction, while we were eating together, I looked across the room at my children and grandchildren. They are knit into this life-giving extended family and it struck me how truly remarkable all this is. I realized that living in Washington, D.C. as we have for most of our adult lives, we have almost imperceptibly begun to believe that people don't have families anymore. People now talk about

their "relationships"—the bonds they have formed with selected individuals. Because they are based on choice, these relationships are constantly changing.

There are relationships here too, but they are based on something more than choice. We simply take whoever comes and try to make them feel as welcome as possible—as we were made to feel welcome when we came into the family, either through birth or by marriage.

And then I realize: This is the power of love. What else could make this happen? What else has the power to bring all these people together every five years? That surely takes more than biology.

After the reunion my wife and I spend a couple weeks traveling on the west coast and then in northern Indiana, visiting other family members and friends. All the connections are Mennonites, although many of us have joined other churches.

One evening as I am writing this, sitting on a motel balcony overlooking a busy highway in Elkhart County, a horse-drawn wagon with rubber tires and electric taillights comes by. The young man at the reins pulls up at the traffic light behind an 18-wheeler. The horse's rhythmic clip-clop and the big diesel's roar as it shifts down to stop do not harmonize. Although no longer the traditional Amish buggy, this wagon is still very much out of place—on the wrong road in the wrong century.

But people are coming here now from all over the world to see these out-of-synch people. We could hardly find a motel room. Only 30 years ago being Amish or

*I looked
across
the room
at
my children
and
grandchildren.
They
are knit
into this
life-giving
family
and
it struck me
how truly
remarkable
all this is.*

Mennonite was something to be vaguely ashamed of. Now it's become a tourist attraction.

The change seems to have started in the Sixties. That was when the nation faced the reality about warfare in Vietnam. It was also when we learned from Dr. Martin Luther King and the African-American Christians that nonviolent love can change social structures. And it was when we began to realize that bigger and better consumer goods could not satisfy the soul.

The next day a friend and I tour Menno-Hof, the Amish and Mennonite museum in Shipshewana. Both of us are historians and we are happily impressed by the high quality of the exhibits and by their historical accuracy. But somehow hearing the Amish and Mennonite story told using Protestant theological categories doesn't seem quite adequate. There is more to this story than these philosophical concepts can contain.

What impresses me is to find that this large building was erected in a two-week barn-raising by men from the local Amish and Mennonite communities, fed by women from these communities. The Amish were the bosses during the barn-raising, but now it falls to Mennonite volunteers to conduct the tours, explaining to the American public why Amish and Mennonites live in the unique ways they do.

At one point there is a diagram with several sets of circles. One circle stands for the Kingdom of God in which Christians live, and the other stands for the world in which everyone else lives. This of course is the standard model which scholars have developed to explain the early Anabaptists. But one has

to wonder how many of the men and women who participated in this great barn-raising actually conduct their lives in these starkly dualistic terms?

Orie and Eda Conrad did not. They lived joyfully and productively in the only world they knew, the one God has created and continues to create. If there was sin in that world—and it was very clear to them that there was—they did whatever they could to correct it, and to alleviate the sufferings it always causes.

At the reunion we did not talk much about the way Orie and Eda

served the community and the world, but we all knew about it. They were regular and substantial contributors to MCC and to missions, both in money and in kind. They played a major role in building a retirement home in their community which now serves everyone, Mennonite and non-Mennonite.

They played a key role in founding a mission church in their neighborhood. They were generous to individuals who needed help, as they were to their children and grandchildren. In his late sixties Orie volunteered to spend two weeks with an MDS crew in Haiti, cleaning up after a hurricane. They were distinguished throughout their lives by their obvious love, for each other.

Love is that way. It can't be put in a circle. If you decide to love, it's impossible to know where to stop. Loving your enemies and loving your family, loving God and loving all creation, loving your spouse and loving people you'll never see— isn't it all one big circle?

As we end this visit and return to the city, with its immense opportunities and nearly impossible problems, my mind keeps returning to our Mennonite and Amish roots. The phrase which keeps coming to my mind is, There's something here worth saving but we don't know what it is.

And then I find myself asking, How can we pass on to our children and grandchildren what has been given to us if we cannot name it?

Ivan J. Kauffman, Washington, D.C., has spent his professional life as a writer of poetry and history.

Christmas Ideas for Families



Artwork by Cheryl Benner

★ Each year our family chooses a Christmas theme. We center our decorations and celebrations around the theme.

One year we chose “The Nutcracker Suite”—we went to hear “The Nutcracker Suite,” we did a puzzle together on nutcrackers, we went to the library and got books on nutcrackers.

Sometimes we pick a country (for example, Austria), learn about the country, and make decorations and food from that country.

This year our theme was “gifts.” We decorated inside and out with empty boxes wrapped in Christmas paper. Our activities centered around gifts of ourselves to others. We volunteered as a family at the local nursing home, we invited friends into our home for simple meals throughout December, and we delivered a food package to a needy family.

—Dennis, Sharon, Daniel, and Heather
Showalter, West Liberty, OH

★ A single friend who has space for a tree made it her tradition to have a bunch of friends over every year for breakfast together, after which we all helped to trim the tree. Other married friends, as well, invited our small group to help their families to decorate their trees. Tree decorating is a friendly, informal way to involve a variety of friends.

—Grace Nolt, Canadensis, PA

★ We’ve started a new tradition—the 12 days of Christmas. Twelve days before Christmas, we take a small gift to our chosen family (perhaps a neighbor—a new family at church—someone ill). We secretly set the gift, decorated with a bow, on their porch.

Then the next night, we put two small items, each with a bow, at the same spot. The third night we take three. Each successive night we stealthily deliver our little gifts. It takes creativity to deliver without being discovered! We love it.

On Christmas Eve we take our last gift and sing “The 12 Days of Christmas,” putting our items into the song, thus revealing ourselves. (For example, “On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me—a pumpkin with a shiny green bow,” or “On the second day of Christmas my true love gave to me—two bright red candles.”)

—David and Martha Clymer family
Shirleysburg, PA

★ We have always made a small fuss about St. Nicholas Day. The children put their shoes outside their doors on the night of December 5—and find small gifts in them in the morning. We have never encouraged belief in Santa Claus, but instead have tried to tell St. Nicholas’s story.

We also try to make a fuss at Epiphany, January 6, with a couple of presents (usually ones that were misplaced or didn’t arrive by Christmas) and some attention to the story of the Magi.

We don't put up decorations until (at least) the first Sunday of Advent (the neighbors always do it Thanksgiving Day)—but leave them up until Epiphany, trying to show that our lives are based on the Christian calendar.

We light Advent wreath candles at dinner each night and take turns reading from an Advent devotional booklet. We found putting greens in a large, shallow bowl filled with sand allowed us to water them over the six weeks. Also, if you put candles in the freezer, they burn more slowly—so the one from the first Sunday can last until Christmas.

— *The Baker-Smiths, Waitsburg, WA*

★ As the Christmas holidays approached, we told our children that Christmas is celebrated in two ways. The most important is the birth of Christ. The other is a folk festival—trees, gifts, cookies.

— *Ellen and Paul Peachey
Harpers Ferry, WV*

★ Because our family consists of four people, we are able to focus on one individual each week during Advent. After the reading and singing, we discuss that person's year—successes, disappointments, areas of growth, changes. We conclude with each of us praying for the person of the week.

— *Steve and Phyllis Swartz, London, OH*

★ I know one family who sends music to each other—so they can practice on their own, like piano duets, quartets, etc.—then when they get together, they play and sing what they have practiced—and they surprise each other by how wonderfully it turns out.

— *Alice Buehler, Elmira, Ontario*

★ For about three or four years, I sent out a "Let's get together and sing carols" invitation to all the people on our block. Approximately 30 people gathered for a Sunday night sing-along. One neighbor who had musical training played our old organ and directed. Some of the teenagers came, too. It was a very festive evening.

— *Sarah Yoder Scott, Newark, DE*

*A single friend
who has space for a tree
made it her tradition
to have
a bunch of friends
over every year
for breakfast together,
after which we all helped
to trim the tree.*

★ This year my three-year-old son, Si, was part of our family's first-ever cousin gift exchange (the adults have been exchanging names for years). Each child was responsible for getting a gift for another child.

After an unfruitful visit to the neighborhood toy store, Si and I decided to make a cookie-baking kit for four-year-old Leah. Si and I then made three packages of master oatmeal cookie baking mix (one with mini M&Ms, one with cinnamon and raisins, and one with coconut).

Next, we went to a fabric store and Si picked out fabric which "we" made into a small apron. We also took a trip to a discount store where Si got a small cookie sheet, a hot mitt, and a small wooden spoon.

We packaged it all up in a one-gallon ice cream bucket, covered with contact paper. Si was enthusiastic and very involved throughout the whole process.

When he presented Leah with her packages, Si was as excited about giving a gift as he was about receiving one. He was obviously proud to be sharing something he had made especially for Leah. Leah loved her cookie-baking kit. She immediately put on her apron and wanted to get started.

— *Gwen Gustafson-Zook, Portland, OR*

★ One year our extended family decided to give gifts to the local pregnancy center instead of having our usual grab-bag gift exchange. The notice that went to the family members read as follows: "Christmas is the celebration of a birth, a baby's birth. That baby appeared to be illegitimate, poor, perhaps even homeless. That baby was Jesus, who grew to be the Christ, the savior of the world! This year, instead of a grab-bag, we're inviting you to celebrate Christmas by bringing a gift for a baby. The baby may be illegitimate, poor, or even homeless. It will be a baby born to someone who is being ministered to by the local pregnancy center. We hope the baby will grow to be a Christian, someone who will share the good news of Christ, the savior of the world. Bring the gifts to the family gathering unwrapped so everyone can see them. Spend as much, or as little, as you like. Gifts may be new, or as-good-as-new."

— *Mary Lahman Heatwole, Harrisonburg, VA*



*“This year,
instead
of a grab-bag,
we’re inviting you
to celebrate
Christmas
by bringing a gift
for a baby.”*

★ In the last few years, we have asked each of our five children to write a letter, telling about their year’s activities and some of the thoughts and experiences they have had. These have come to be a greater “gift” than all the material things used to be.

— *John L. and Beulah E. Fretz, Salem, OR*

★ I know one family who draws names and sets an arbitrary amount (\$4.37, for example) which has to be spent on the gift. They have a wonderful time going to thrift stores and garage sales to see what they can come up with.

— *Kay Driver, Columbus, OH*

★ This year for our gift exchange within the extended family, we chose paper as a theme and set a price limit of \$7. Peter thinned his library by giving away books. To his eldest sister he gave “How to Enjoy Aging”; to another (single) sister who often asks him financial advice, a book on “Financial Investments”; to another almost-or-near retiring couple, “How to Retire and Enjoy It.” In all, he gave away 17 books. Now he can buy more!

— *Peter and Susan Kehler, Sumas, WA*

★ I try to shop all year long. I have found some wonderful gifts after Christmas that I save for the next year. I also keep an ongoing list of things I buy throughout the year so I remember what I have purchased.

— *Clark, Cindy, Lara, and Hilary Breeze
Champaign, IL*

★ When the children were small, they liked to go on treasure hunts to find their gifts. After about two or three clues, the fourth clue would read something like this—“Have hot chocolate and cookies together as a family before you get your next clue.” Now that the children are teenagers, we play the game Rook. When a person wins a hand, he or she gets to open a gift.

— *Dennis, Sharon, Daniel, and Heather
Showalter, West Liberty, Ohio*

★ One year we came home from the Christmas Eve service at church and frosted our cookies. It was such fun that it became a tradition. The children invited their friends for cookie decorating, or we would invite an elderly person or two to come home from church with us



to join the party, share their creativity, and take some cookies home.

— *James and Anna Juhnke
North Newton, KS*

★ We have our (nuclear) family Christmas on Christmas Eve. We schedule the extended family Christmas for any date we can all make.

The treasured custom has been “circle time” when adults meet and each takes five to 10 minutes to say what has been most important in the past year. It takes several hours. In this way, in our family of extroverts, we never miss hearing the real heartbeat of each person during our otherwise rather raucous get-togethers.

— *Ruth and Timothy Stoltzfus Jost
Columbus, OH*

★ Our family has always invited another family for Christmas dinner. They are generally, if not always, a family far away from home, with no family close by with whom they can celebrate Christmas. Often we ask the guest family to bring one of their own traditional dishes to the dinner to make it more like their own familiar Christmas. We try to have families with young children, if possible.

— *Norma J. Pauls, Oakville, Ontario*

★ Christmas morning begins with opening stocking gifts, a favorite Christmas tradition with our daughters which began years ago when they were small. Christmas then usually meant taking long car trips to grandparents. To help pass the time while we drove, we took their filled stockings along. Based on the length of the trip and the number of gifts in the stockings, they opened gifts at set time intervals. The trip went fast and the girls were happy, occupied with their unwrapped treasures.

— *Herb and Sarah Myers, Mount Joy, PA*

★ Many times my husband and I have been alone on Christmas Day. So we’ve gone to a nearby city, taken a nature walk, seen a movie. Sometimes we have pizza and Pepsi in Christmas goblets. Christmas dinner (turkey, naturally) is for when our sons and their families can be with us.

— *Esther Bixler Heatwole, Rocky Ford, CO*

★ To alleviate a “let-down” feeling on December 26, we usually gave our children a new puzzle or game that day which they could enjoy together.

— *Ellen and Paul Peachey*
Harpers Ferry, WV

★ When the Weber extended family gathers for the day, one person is responsible for painting a simple mural scene. In the course of the day, everyone present paints themselves into the picture. The murals are saved and provide an amusing portrait of the family at different stages.

— *Ann and Byron Weber Becker*
Kitchener, Ontario

★ We and most of our adult children live in Indiana, while most of our relatives live in Iowa. So my side of the family meets each year, the weekend before Thanksgiving, at a motel in Illinois about halfway between our homes. There are four generations of us, and it is a special time for each age group. Some of the younger children think “Illinois” is a motel with a swimming pool where they spend time with cousins from Iowa!

— *Dan and Annabelle Unternahrer*
Shipshewana, IN

★ In both of our extended families, we rent local school gyms for a Christmas afternoon get-together of rousing games of basketball, volleyball, indoor soccer, four-square, hockey, prisoners base, or steal-the-bacon.

— *Jewel Showalter, Landisville, PA*

★ We have three manger scenes. One stays on a shelf where everyone can see it but not touch it. Another is under the Christmas tree and gets rearranged on a regular basis. The third is made of fabric, and the figures are like little stuffed pillows. The stable door folds up and becomes a carrying case which the children take all over with them so they can play “Baby Jesus” wherever they want to.

Our congregation always has a mitten tree, where everyone is invited to hang a pair of mittens on a tree in the lobby. After Christmas, they are given to one of the city’s homeless shelters to distribute.

— *John and Sandra Drescher-Lehman*
Richmond, VA

★ We have learned to drop traditions that are a lower priority for us. At one time we made peppernuts as a family, but now we simply remember the fun of cutting and baking all those tiny little morsels. At one time we had a Jesse Tree, with symbols and scriptures from Adam and Eve to Joseph and Mary, to mark each day in December. Now we are too busy to enjoy it, so we let it go.

— *Jim, Lois, Britt, Austin, Reid, and Lane*
Kaufmann, New Paris, IN

★ This past Christmas Eve I was feeling sad as I prepared to work the 3-11 shift as an R.N. on a psychiatric unit, because I was unable to attend the Christmas Eve service at church. Then the thought came to me, “If I can’t attend the Christmas Eve service, I can take it to my patients who also cannot attend.”

I planned a service of carols and readings. Patients willingly read the scriptures. A young college music major sang, “O Holy Night.” I accompanied the carols on the piano. A short reading spoke of experiencing the meaning of Christmas away from home. Afterwards, many patients expressed appreciation for the service. I enjoyed it so much I’ve thought of volunteering to work Christmas Eve next year!

— *Leona Kraybill Myer, Pittsburgh, PA*

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Christmas Ideas for Families can be ordered by using the Readers Book Service on page 33.

*The treasured custom
has been “circle time”
when adults
meet and each takes
five to ten minutes
to say
what has been
most important
in the past year.*



A YEAR OF Menno Simons Birthday Celebrations

by Ed van Straten

"Toward the end of January, 1496"—that is what historians say when you ask them for the most likely birth date for Menno Simons. Therefore, we Mennonites of his native country, The Netherlands, are preparing ourselves for a year of celebration. We are talking about 1996 as the "Menno Year."

Local congregations are organizing a variety of events, ranging from a festive commemoration service to an exhibition, to special discussion groups, to a musical and a play, both written for the occasion. There will be national events and international events (see box on page 24). It will be quite a festival—concerts, lectures, excursions (bus, car, bicycle), youth programs—you name it.

A new portrait of Menno Simons has been commissioned. New Mennosongs have been written and composed. It will all kick off with the celebration of World Fellowship Sunday, January 28, 1996, for which Dutch Mennonites prepared the materials. This start can be an international event in which congregations all over the world can participate.*

Why are we going to such lengths? Some Mennonites from other European countries think that we are overdoing it. "Menno was no saint," they say. "He was just another Anabaptist like the rest of us. He may have been important in his time, but what does he mean to us?" They think some kind of celebration is okay, but it should be sober and simple.

A lot can be said for that point of view. And, as a matter of fact, we don't usually call ourselves "Mennonites" in our own language. We call ourselves *Dooptsgezinden*, for already early on we felt we

shouldn't be named after a human being. And, indeed, some Dutch Mennonites are raising their eyebrows, too. So, once more, why are we doing it? What do we want to accomplish by it? I should, in fairness, put the question to myself. I've been involved in the planning and (for some parts) the practical preparations for over five years now. Why do I do it?

As I see it, we have several reasons, several goals. For myself, I enormously enjoy thinking, writing, organizing, planning, involving other people. But although there's nothing wrong

**MENNO
SIMONS**
5

with having a good time, this answer is not enough. I want—and here I can say we want, for this has been said clearly by the overall planning committee—to get as many people involved as possible in such a way that their spirituality is deepened by it.

Secondly, having a festival is an attractive way to spend time together—and togetherness, the sense of belonging together, needs to be strengthened every once in a while. Knowing that you are a family (and that is part of the Mennonite experience) is good, but it is a rather theoretical knowledge if the family never meets. So having a festival together is fun and also serves an important goal.

Where is Menno Simons in all this? Well, he started us on the

way, and now we want to stand still for a moment and ask ourselves what we are doing on this way. Our central question is, what is the relevance of Menno's thinking for present-day Christians? And although historians will get their share in the festival, we are not going to celebrate history. Rather, we will celebrate the present, being aware that the present is rooted in the past, but also acknowledging that the future begins in the present.

Take, for example, the European Mennonite Conference, which will be held May 16-19, 1996, in a Mennonite retreat center in Elspeet, Holland. The theme is "500 Years After Menno Simons: On the Way to God's Future." The sub-themes reflect elements from the life of Menno Simons, but deal with our present situation. Neil Blough (an American in Paris, but not the Gershwin one!) will speak on the first sub-theme: "To Decide." Like Menno, who as a priest had to choose between staying in the Roman Catholic Church or joining the Anabaptist movement, so "for every man and nation comes the moment to decide."

As a consequence, people start to serve and may have to suffer. That was Menno's experience, and so Bernhard Ott, from Switzerland, will address the second sub-theme: "To Serve and To Suffer."

Again drawing on Menno's experiences, the third sub-theme is: "Consolation and Hope," with Hildegard Wiedemann (Germany) as first speaker. Each sub-theme will also be spoken to by a second speaker. They are, in the same order: Anneke van der Zijpp, Holland; Lydia Penner, a Canadian

but serving a Dutch congregation as a pastor; and Jose Gallardo from Spain. There will be some 30 workshops, all of them addressing aspects of congregational life.

This will be the sixth European Mennonite Conference. A main goal of these conferences is to keep us Mennonites together across national, cultural, and language borders. The languages used in the upcoming conference will be Dutch, English, French, and German.

We are not extending official invitations to Mennonites in other parts of the world since we do not want to compete with the Mennonite World Conference Assembly (to be held about a half year later in January, 1997), but any Mennonite from any part of the world who happens to be around at the time is, of course, welcome to participate. This will be very much a festive occasion for meeting each other once again (we are a family), but also an occasion for growing in faith and for exploring new ways of spirituality. And who knows what else may come of it? In the past these conferences have led to lasting friendships and even weddings, but those are not our stated goals!

What would Menno have thought of such a celebration? We do not know, but, surprisingly enough, we might find out. We invited him to join us in Elspeet when the European Mennonites go there in May. He has said he'll try to be there. He might even enjoy it all. But I have this feeling that he would rather go back to his own time, than stay with us. We will let him do that. But we shall go on, facing our own time, our own future.

Ed van Straten, El Leidschendam, The Netherlands, served for many years as executive secretary of the Dutch Mennonite Church. He is a member of the Mennonite World Conference Executive Committee.

**This material is available from Mennonite World Conference, 50 Kent Ave., Kitchener, Ontario, N2G 3R1, Canada.*

National and International Activities for the 500th Birthday of Menno Simons, 1996

January 28

World Fellowship Sunday.

Material prepared for Mennonites around the world.*
In Holland, congregations get together regionally to celebrate.

February 2-3

Conference for international historians in the city of Leeuwarden.

February 3-March 15

National Menno Simons Exhibition, Leeuwarden:

1. Friesland in the time of the early Reformation;
2. The early Anabaptist Reformation in the North;
3. Menno Simons' role in the Reformation.

Spring

Several study conferences,
including the Dutch Mennonite Women's Federation.

May 15-June 30

Menno Simons is the subject of the "Monument of the Month"
in the Province of Friesland (where Menno was born).

May 16-19

European Mennonite Conference, Elspeet.
Subject: "500 Years After Menno Simons: On the Way to God's Future."

July 3-6

International Theological Symposium, Elspeet (by invitation only).

September

Symposium by the Theology Department
of the University of Amsterdam.
Subject: "The Mennonties and the Lutherans."

October 24-27

International Youth Conference, Groningen.

November 17

Closing ceremony.

Additional Activities

- An international jury will at some time in 1996 name the winner of the essay contest.
- Camerata Trajectina, a nationally known ensemble of Dutch musicians, will give concerts of hymns from the 16th and 17th centuries by Anabaptists. They are also planning a tour through the U.S. and Canada. The concert will be recorded on two CDs.
- Money has been collected to enable a student from a country in the Southern Hemisphere to study at the Amsterdam Seminary for a year after 1996.
- We hope postal authorities will grant us the requested commemoration stamp in honor of Menno Simons.

Swiss—But No Henry Dunant

by Peter J. Dyck

It must be 30 years ago, but my blood pressure still goes up whenever I think of it. And she was such a sweet old lady, a real babushka, as kind and gentle as my own grandmother. Anyone who would have the nerve to get her out of bed, order her to leave the train, and tell her she couldn't go through Switzerland because she was from Russia and didn't have the right papers must have ice water in his veins.

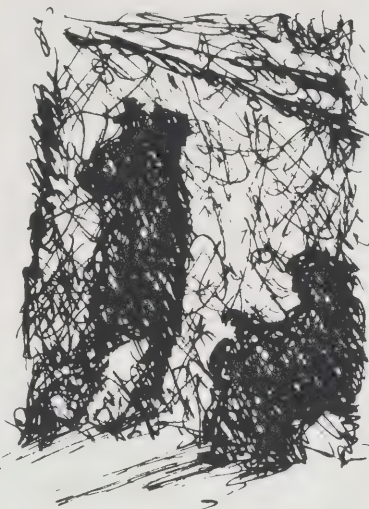
After World War II, the Mennonites who had been in Russia were scattered, separated, and frightened. More than 23,000 were kidnapped and forcibly returned to the Soviet Union. Families were mercilessly separated.

Early in our MCC ministry in Germany, we realized that one of the most urgent needs was to establish a Tracing Service, an attempt to find and reunite missing family members. At one time, we had more than 17,000 names on this list. Mrs. Klassen was one of them.

And then we found her husband. He had already gone to Paraguay and was pioneering alone in the cruel Chaco. What joy, what indescribable happiness for all of us in the MCC office, especially for the two persons concerned, to be able to send a telegram and say: "We have found your wife." MCC workers would smile, thank God, and pass the word along that there had been another "find."

Mrs. Klassen stayed with us for a number of days while we arranged transportation for her to Paraguay. Exploring all possible means, we were able to find a ship that was to sail from Naples, Italy, to Buenos Aires, Argentina, within two weeks. We made all necessary connections: bought the ticket, informed her husband, and had people ready to meet her train in Naples and take her to the ship. We thought we had overlooked nothing. Everyone was excited. She could not thank us enough. We all thanked God.

Finally, the day came for her departure. We put her on the train in Frankfurt, made sure she was comfortable, had a bed to sleep in, and was



artwork by Cheryl Benner

relaxed. The train would take her from Germany through Switzerland and across the Alps into Italy. Nothing to worry about.

At one o'clock in the morning the telephone rang. It was a Swiss border official informing me that they had taken Mrs. Klassen off the train. Would I please come and pick her up? There was nothing I could do to change his mind. Even if I had succeeded, the train had already left without her, and she would never have made the ship in time on another train.

Henry Dunant, the compassionate Swiss gentleman in whose honor the Red Cross was founded (hence the Swiss flag in the Red Cross with the colors reversed) would probably have turned in his grave had he known that one of his countrymen had pulled a sweet old grandmother out of her warm bed, set her on the dark and cold station platform, and telephoned me to come and pick her up. He said she didn't have the right papers. What papers do you need to continue sleeping while the train goes through Switzerland, crossing two borders, one in and one out?

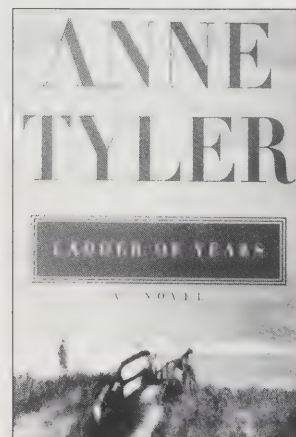
I hate borders.



Peter J. Dyck has spent a rich life shuttling refugees to new homelands, overseeing relief programs, and telling wise and witty stories. He and his wife, Elfrieda, live in Scottdale, PA.

Ladder of Years, by Anne Tyler. Alfred A. Knopf, 1995. 326 pages, \$24.00.

Reviewed by Louise Stoltzfus



I read most of Anne Tyler's latest novel, *Ladder of Years*, on a summer weekend while sitting by the ocean near Cape May, New Jersey. It was the perfect spot for encountering another group of Tyler's finely drawn American middle class characters. For it is from such a place that her heroine, Cordelia F. Grinstead, escapes.

These are ordinary folks with ordinary lives. They live in old houses that require hours of upkeep. They eat celery, cornflakes, and canned soup. They stay in dumpy little beach houses with leaky roofs. They find their children getting older and moving on, determined, it seems, to repeat their parents' failures.

So it is that during a family vacation, Delia Grinstead walks down the beach and purposefully out of this life of overwhelming ordinariness. Suddenly she is alone in a new town with a new job, a new home, a new wardrobe, and new friends. Which, with surprise, she soon discovers has resulted in still another stretch of ordinary life.

The extraordinary final scenes of this novel completely rely on all the carefully crafted pages that precede them. That is the best part of *Ladder of Years*. One is amply rewarded for waiting until the very end to read the last pages, however exquisitely difficult that may become.

—LS

I Brake for Buttercups, by Kenton K. Brubaker

It was a pleasant surprise. I was blissfully beheading my bluegrass when I encountered the brilliant yellow buttercups in the path of the whirling blade. I stopped and carefully wove my way between the delicate, waxy blooms. I did this all over the yard. It was the day I braked for buttercups.

Again last week I encountered another beautiful wildflower in our lawn, the catchfly, *Silene arvensis*. I recognized it because I had grown several

dozen from seed for our wildflower restoration project at the arboretum. It occurred to me that our lawn was exerting its right to be natural, rather than artificial. I wondered what would happen if I allowed all the nascent wildflowers to express themselves: Queen Anne's lace, hopclover, white clover, evening primrose, butterfly weed. Perhaps the lawn would come alive with bees, butterflies, and hum-

mingbirds. Perhaps I wouldn't need to mow.

"Restoring nature in our own backyards" is the theme of Sara Stein's recent book, *Noah's Garden*. I've been rereading the fascinating account of Stein's reeducation, of her conversion from horticulture to ecology, of her new appreciation of animal life, as well as native plants. I have not yet reached her level of commitment to wild things, but I'm coming along. I still have great trouble appreciating muskrats, especially their destructive behavior on the arboretum pond dike. I also begrudge the groundhogs all the broccoli they sample in my vegetable experimental plots.

I have learned to appreciate the spiders, wasps, lady beetles, praying mantises, snakes, toads, birds, and other insect control creatures in my gardening work. They have been so effective I haven't had to use an insecticide for years. While I do also plant to avoid insects, I'm sure most of the control is due to natural predators.

Natural restoration of our backyards will be a major challenge, but with people like Sara Stein leading us along, it may just happen. Until then, we can appreciate the surprises as we mow.

Robert Frost once happened upon some butterfly weed:

... a tall tuft of flowers beside a brook,

A leaping tongue of bloom the scythe had spared
Beside a reedy brook the scythe had bared ...

The mower in the dew had loved them thus,
By leaving them to flourish, not for us,

Nor yet to draw one thought of ours to him,
But from sheer morning gladness at the brim.

— "The Tuft of Flowers," Robert Frost

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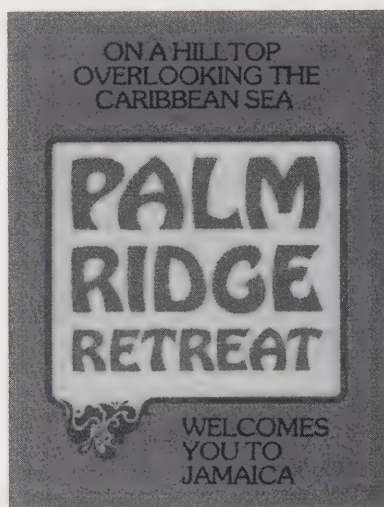
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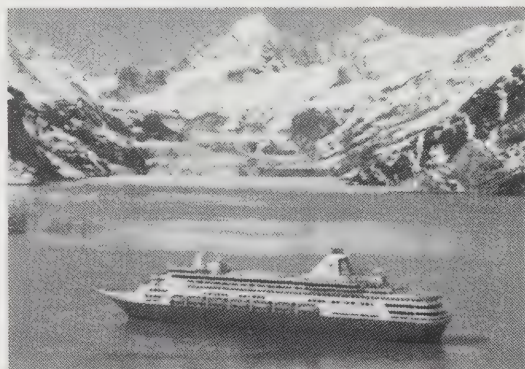
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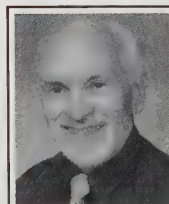
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Kenton K. Brubaker is professor of biology at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Virginia.



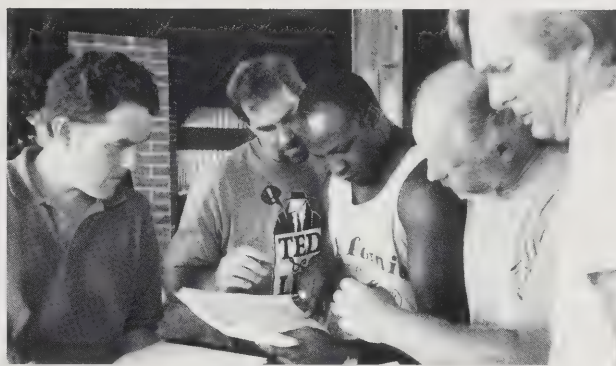
continent. It opened in Saint John, New Brunswick, on Sunday, September 10, 1995. "Rise with the Sun" is sponsored by 11 Canadian relief and development groups, including Mennonite Central Committee Canada.

- The World's Window and Gallery in Kansas City, Missouri, will host an exhibition featuring the works of four Mennonite potters during November and December 1995. Entitled

"Common Roots Clay Perspective," the show features **Dick Lehman**, Goshen, Indiana; **Mark Nafziger**, Archbold, Ohio; **Lynn Lais**, Grantsville, Maryland; and **Royce Yoder**, Lederach, Pennsylvania. All of these artists attended Goshen (IN) College in the mid-1970s and have gone on to become professional, full-time potters. "Common Roots Clay Perspective" opens on Saturday, November 4 and continues through December 16. The World's Window and Gallery is located at 4120 Pennsylvania in the Westport section of Kansas City.

- Lancaster Mennonite (PA) High School's 23rd annual Fall Festival weekend will be held November 17-19. Two arts events will highlight the weekend. The fall school play, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, opens on Friday evening, November 17, 7:30 p.m., with a second performance on Saturday evening, November 18. The school's second Alumni Concert will be the featured event on Sunday, November 19, 3 p.m., with pianist **Erica Godshall** and soprano **Lorraine Sheeler**. Tickets for these performances will be sold at the door.

- Theatre Akimbo, a professional community-based



Clarifying lines for a stage reading of "Stealing Home" during the Shenandoah International Playwrights Retreat (left to right): Jerry Bradley, actor; Ted Swartz, actor-writer; Tyrone Wilson, actor; Duane Sider, actor-writer, and Ted Story, director.

- Bass-baritone **Daniel Lichti** is known internationally as a gifted oratorio performer and recitalist. In July he toured Germany with the renowned Bach Choir of Bethlehem with performances in Berlin, Leipzig, Wurzburg, and other German cities. Lichti also appeared in the title role of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* at the Shenandoah Valley Bach Festival, Eastern Mennonite University, June 18, 1995. His most recent recording is Schubert's *Schwanengesang* with concert pianist Janina Fialkowska. An earlier recording, *Songs of Hugo Wolf*, was selected "Best of the Quarter" by *Gramophone* magazine and also received a Juno nomination. Lichti is a member of Rockway Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ontario.

- **Ray Dirks**, Winnipeg, Manitoba, has curated a new art exhibition featuring African women artists. A collection of 77 paintings by 44 artists from 12 African countries, "Rise with the Sun" depicts women at work in the fields, markets, and professions of the African



theater company in residence at Eastern Mennonite (VA) University, has taken on the task of writing and producing a play that will examine what happens to a father-son relationship when Alzheimer's disease invades a family. The creative team includes writers **Duane M. Sider** and **Ted Swartz**. EMU theater director **Barbra Graber** will direct the play, entitled *Stealing Home*. Both Sider and Graber have lost a parent to Alzheimer's. Graber noted that this will not be an educational piece about Alzheimer's disease, but rather a drama. "It's as much about the father-son relationship as it is about the disease." Theatre Akimbo will premiere the work in May 1996 in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

- Cincinnati Mennonite Fellowship will host its 3rd biennial *Mennonite Arts Weekend* on February 2-4, 1996. This year's theme is "The Body in Art and Spirituality." Presenters include **Dirk Eitzen**, film critic/maker; **Katherine Bartel**, sculptor; **Raylene Hinz-Penner**, poet; **Esther Wiens**, storyteller; and **David Waltner-Toews**, poet. The artists will perform and talk about their work in Saturday workshop sessions. In addition, an evening concert and Sunday morning "Arts in Worship" service are planned. Call 513-281-0793 to register.

- *Quietly Landed?* a musical drama written by **Carol Ann Weaver**, Waterloo, Ontario, will be performed at St. Jacobs (ON) Schoolhouse Theatre on November 3 and 4, 1995; and at Conrad Grebel (ON) College on March 23, 1996. See page 28 in this issue of *Festival Quarterly* for Weaver's description of the composition of this work. To arrange a performance of the production in your community, contact Carol Ann Weaver at 519-576-1068.

Quietly Landed? On Letting Our Stories Sing

by Carol Ann Weaver

LET IT SING

Carol Ann Weaver, 1995

Lis - ten to - your sto - ry, Lis - ten to your voice and let it sing - Lis - ten to your sto - ry Lis - ten to your voice and let it sing!

* final chord on final repetition should remain F.

If you want a pneumonia-free year with 12 months of sleepful nights, don't get involved in a year-long, collaborative musical/drama project based on the writings of women of Mennonite background. And surely do not premiere it some 500 miles from home, driving the sound system there in a failing 1987 Nissan. Or you may find yourself with a 90-minute work—*Quietly Landed?*—involving some 45 people as contributors and cast.

While flying to the 1994 Cincinnati Mennonite Arts Weekend, I was reading Clarissa Pinkola Estes' *Women Who Run with the Wolves*. Estes suggests that women, like wolves, need to find their own pack. It wasn't until I returned from Cincinnati that I began to recognize the call of "my pack" in the poetry of Julia Kasdorf, the singing of Mary Oyer, and the artwork of Juanita Kauffman. But a collective howl?

Three months later I envisioned a dramatic piece from "my pack"—stories, poems, movement, and music from women of Mennonite background. At the June 1994 *Women Doing Theology* conference in Bluffton, Ohio, I presented my ideas to the coordinating committee of the upcoming *Quiet in the Land?* conference, to be held in Millersville, Pennsylvania, in June, 1995. They

told me to proceed, trusting funds could be raised.

My first collaborator, Carol Penner, and I chased children, peanut butter, and swings as we laid out our philosophy and sent out a call for autobiographical stories from Menno-women. We were joined by dramatist Cheryl Nafziger-Leis, who auditioned actors and became dramatic director for our cast of five.

We received stories as sacred text, allowing them to shape our piece. Beginning with the recently collected 16th century Anabaptist women's stories accompanied by the Amish "Lobsang," we gradually moved into the 20th century. "Part of being quiet meant not feeling" by Gerry Schrock and "Women need God in their own image" by Anne Harnish carried their own tunes. So did Carol Bauman's story of holding infant Elise in one hand while playing timpani in the other without missing a beat in the Haydn symphony; or Ruth Brunk Stoltzfus' story of her mother nursing two children at once—Esther Eby (Glass) and George R. Brunk II.

After choosing the texts, my real work began—that of setting four di brandt poems for soprano and piano, creating blues-rap versions of Raylene Hinz-Penner's "Wild Woman on the Oklahoma Panhandle," Jean Janzen's "Peaches

in Minnesota," and Shari Wagner's "Inheritance," as well as weaving live music from three different keyboards among the stories. Taped singing and speaking from various Mennonite and Amish sources—from Great Aunt Elizabeth to midwife Elsie Cressman—added further voices.

A final extended poetic work by Julia Kasdorf, "Rachel on the Threshing Floor," told about the tragic buggy accident which killed her Amish grandmother, compelling Kasdorf to "float on the Lobsang" to find her again.

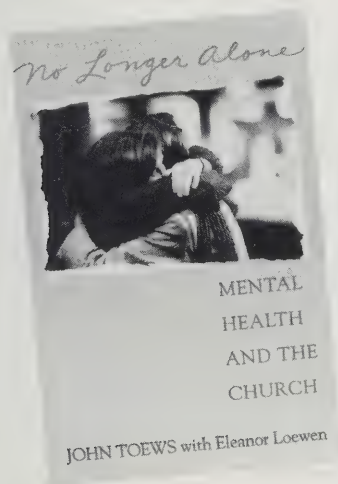
So, have we been quietly landed as Anabaptist women? If noisy, have we been heard? If silenced, can we still remember our stories, find our voices, and sing? History—as we learned at the Millersville conference—now seems ready for our voices. Each of us has a song!

("Let It Sing," above, is the final song of the musical drama *Quietly Landed?*)



Carol Ann Weaver is a pianist, composer, and teacher of music at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario.

• A 1995 annual published in the southern Palatinate region of Germany—*Heimat-Jahrbuch 1995: des Landkreises Sudliche Weinstrasse*—tells the story of aid given by Mennonite Central Committee to the city of Landau following World War II. From 1946 to 1948, Delbert and Thelma Gratz, Bluffton, Ohio, served as MCC representatives in the region. They supervised various operations, including a school feeding program at the Pestalozzischule in Landau. In 1988 the city commissioned a bronze plaque to hang in the kitchen of the Pestalozzischule, commemorating the relief work of the Gratzes and MCC. The annual is published in German by Verlag Franz Arbogast, 67731 Otterbach/Kaiserslautern, Deutschland.



• *No Longer Alone: Mental Health and the Church* by John Toews with Eleanor Loewen provides an important new study tool for churches. More and more congregations are committed to offering care and support to those who suffer mental illness. Toews and Loewen draw on their expertise in mental health to address such topics as emotions that hurt or heal, depression, addictions, schizophrenia, grief, and suicide. The end of each chapter has a set of questions which can be used to lead further discussion. Published by Herald Press.

• Other recent publications from Herald Press include:

1) *Sarah* by Mary Christner Borntrager. Book 8 in the Ellie's People series, it is light Christian romance.

2) *Meditations for the Newly Married* by John M. Drescher. Thirty medita-

tions reflecting on the rigors and romance of the marriage relationship.

3) A Centennial Edition of *Rosanna of the Amish* by Joseph W. Yoder. Thoroughly reedited from Yoder's 1940s classic story, with new inside illustrations and maps.

4) *April Bluebird* by Esther Bender, illustrated by Edna Bender. A picture storybook for ages 6-10.

• The Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church recently released *My Dear Joe: Letters of Alice Yoder Brunk 1920-21*. Edited by Joe and Alice Yoder Brunk's daughter, Mabel V. Brunk, the collection highlights the letters Alice wrote to Joe during his year's term as a Mennonite Central Committee relief worker in Turkey. This publication provides a companion piece to a collection of letters published in 1978 entitled *Dear Alice: The Tribulations and Adventures of J.E. Brunk* and edited by Ivan W. Brunk. Both titles available from the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church.

• Two recent books focus on the lives of several late 19th century Amish artists. Good Books has published *Two Amish Folk Artists: The Story of Henry Lapp and Barbara Ebersol* by Louise Stoltzfus. The Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society has published *Amish Folk Artist Barbara Ebersol: Her Life, Fraktur, and Death Record Book* by David Luthy. Both Lapp and Ebersol were gifted folk artists. Both were single. Both lived with a disability. Both stayed deeply connected to their Amish community throughout their lives. These books offer an intimate and scholarly approach to the world of late 19th century Amish artists and their families. Available from Good Books and the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society.

• *Johann Cornies* by David H. Epp is the seventh translated volume in the Echo Historical Series. It profiles the life and times of Johann Cornies, a 19th century agriculturalist, entrepreneur, and education reformer among the Mennonites of southern Russia. Published by Canadian Mennonite Bible College Publications.

• John A. Esau has edited a collection of essays entitled *Understanding Ministerial Leadership*. It is #6 in the

Institute of Mennonite Studies' Text Reader Series and contains 10 essays dealing with the meaning and practice of Christian ministry. Writers include John A. Esau, Marlin E. Miller, Rodney J. Sawatsky, Lydia Neufeld Harder, and other Mennonite pastoral scholars.

• *Refocusing a Vision: Shaping Anabaptist Character in the 21st Century*, edited by John D. Roth, is a collection of six papers presented at the *Whither the Anabaptist Vision?* conference in the summer of 1994 at Elizabethtown (PA) College. The three-day meeting included scholars, pastors, and lay leaders who reflected on the legacy of Harold S. Bender's "The Anabaptist Vision" address given in 1943. The collected essays in this volume are written by Steve Nolt, Levi Miller, Steve Dintaman, John D. Roth, Sara Wenger Shenk, and Ted Koontz. The book also includes a reprinting of Bender's original work. Published by the Mennonite Historical Society, Goshen, Indiana.

• *Anabaptism: A Dying Candle* by Walfried Goossen offers a challenge to Anabaptist Christians to think through our beliefs and practices. Goossen "blows the whistle on what he perceives as a disturbing difference between what most of us say and what we actually do," writes John H. Redekop in the foreword. Published by Windflower Communications, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

• *Prairie Wanderings: The Land and Creatures of the Grasslands* by Paul G. Jantzen describes the natural features of the Great Plains of North America, inviting readers to enter into the strong, yet fragile, relationship between the land and its human inhabitants. A longtime high school biology teacher, Jantzen's writings explore the diverse interrelationships of the natural world. Published by Hearth Publishing and Paul G. Jantzen at Hillsboro, Kansas.

• A new children's book—*Best Friends Forever* by Joyce Moyer Hostetter—examines the fictional friendship between two children—one Mennonite and one a Ukrainian Orthodox immigrant to the United States. For ages 7-11. Published by Friendship Press, a division of the National Council of Churches.

A Discovery of Strangers

Rudy Wiebe. Knopf Canada, 1994. 321 pages. \$27.00, hardcover.

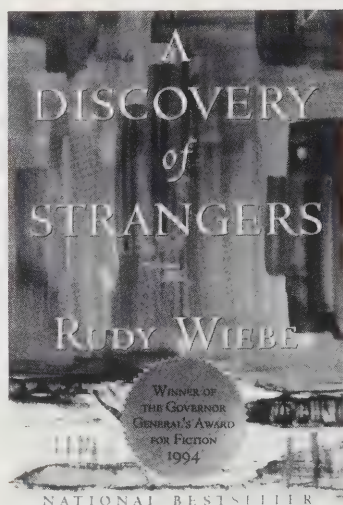
Reviewed by Omar Eby

I knew immediately that I would enjoy Rudy Wiebe's latest novel, *A Discovery of Strangers*. It has maps! Some of us spend whole evenings reading maps. We hope to be cartographers in the next life, charting the celestial Newfoundlands. In Wiebe's book, one keeps a finger at the maps for the first 100 pages; otherwise, one might get lost. For there are many place names in this fictional telling of an 1820s northern Canada British expedition, searching for a route through the Arctic.

Rightly, Wiebe opens the novel with a chapter on the land: lakes, eskers, wolves, caribou. For the land lies there, an eternal presence to be reckoned with; a barrier, threatening yet beautiful. Rather like Wiebe's prose at the book's opening: "And then they (the caribou) will move again into their continual travel. Gradually at first, then more steadily, like driftwood discovering a momentary current, hesitating into daily eddies of moss or crusted erratics but leaning more certainly down into motion along this contorted river, or this lakeshore; easily avoiding the noisy, devastated esker between Roundrock and Winter lakes and their connecting tributary streams . . ."

But the steadfast explorer of Wiebe's literary terrain is handsomely rewarded with numerous scenes: powerful, poignant, prophetic. One such occurs when Robert Hood, youthful English artist of the expedition, spends an evening drawing the beautiful Greenstockings, an Indian girl, by the fire of her hut. He hums, "Greensleeves was my delight . . ." while Birdseye, her mother, keens with ineffable sorrow and intuitive knowledge of the portentous horror about to visit the Yellowknife people with the coming of these Whitemud strangers and while her father, Keskarrah, recites the genesis of their people, an incantation against the potential evil of this English boy penciling his oldest daughter's beauty.

Poignant also: Hood and Greenstockings on another long evening talk about love and life; he sketches,



she kneads skins, yet neither understands the other's language. They do understand the cleaning of each other's lice and the tender feeding of each other her brew of smoked caribou stomach with his silver spoon.

The prophecy, too, is poignant and powerful for its terrible truth. Old Keskarrah, plaintive and confused, says, "These English are deadly. Their coming will destroy us." Greenstockings, now pregnant with Hood's child dares to respond, "Hood didn't destroy me." Her utterance sounds that sweet note of youthful love and vision. For indeed, after Hood's death, she births a child, a symbol of hopeful goodness in this moral landscape as treacherous as the Everlasting Ice—a landscape where British expedition officers renege on written promises to Indian escorts, lie to cover a murder, and resort to cannibalism in the delirium of starvation.

Historical fiction about other cultures has literary traps: the temptations to recount long folk tales and to detail exotic customs. When such matters seem excessive in this novel, impeding the forward thrust of the narrative line, stay with Wiebe's *A Discovery of Strangers*. It won the Canadian Governor General's Award for Fiction in 1994. It will win your high respect for Rudy Wiebe's fiction.

Omar Eby, a writer, teaches at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

FQ price—\$24.30
(Regular price—27.00)

Snake in the Parsonage, poems by Jean Janzen. Good Books, 1995. 73 pages, \$9.95, paperback.

Reviewed by Anna K. Juhnke

Less than three years after her book, *The Upside-Down Tree*, and just before her National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship this year, Jean Janzen has offered a rich new collection of poems. *Snake in the Parsonage* carries memories of Janzen's waking up to body and soul as a pastor's daughter. Most of these poems, however, are glimpses of transcendence in everyday adult life.

Revelation stirs in experiences of wind, water, and light. Passionate life shines through paintings, and music draws us "into the lovely ache of suspension." But love draws us to the things of earth, and Janzen fills her poems with lush, sensual images. There are wild grapes, watermelon pickles, an ivory satin blouse ("all season in church/ I stroked it as I sang").

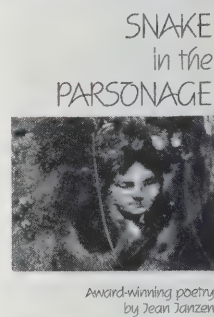
These are not sentimental poems. The dance, the "deep stomp," of life is felt in a poem called "Chicken Guts," and the "gardens of the body" are observed during surgery and autopsy.

Part III expresses the joyful mystery of married love through superb images; e.g., the beloved came to her like a cloud of dusty miller moths: you "circled the light of me, . . . filled all my rooms."

These are poems to read aloud for their lyrical beauty and to cherish as they open the deep places of life to us, filled with light and grace.

Anna K. Juhnke is professor of English at Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas.

FQ price—\$7.96
(Regular price—9.95)



From Martyr to Muppy, edited by Alastair Hamilton, Sjouke Voolstra, and Piet Visser. Amsterdam University Press, 1994. 243 pages, \$29.50, paperback.
Reviewed by Levi Miller

This is an historical introduction to the cultural and religious assimilation of the Mennonites in The Netherlands. It is also a study of the decline of a religious group.

The term Muppy (Mennonite Urban Professionals) is a 1980s term which at first does not quite fit the period upon which these essays focus—the 17th century. Nonetheless, using this post-modern term helps to relate this golden age of the Dutch empire (a time when Mennonites in Holland flourished) to our own century and experience.

Most of the essays in the book were first presented at Amsterdam University in the summer of 1992. Because they are research papers, many will not gain a strong reading among the general North American church public. This is unfortunate.

Further, many readers of *Festival Quarterly* will be interested in what causes a Christian group to become secular, freedom loving, tolerant, individualistic, and willing to bear arms for the state. For example, what caused the Dutch Anabaptists to assimilate in ways which were quite different from their cousins in Russia and North America?

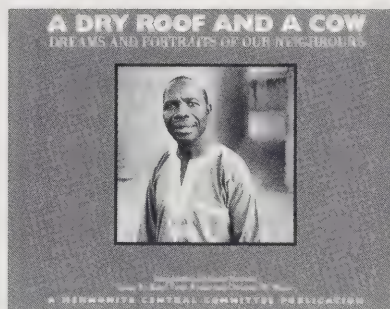
In style, one might wish someone such as Sjouke Voolstra or Mary Sprunger had written the entire book. They each contributed excellent chapters and could have given focus to a collection of varied essays. The variety, however, does not subtract from this volume which leads scholars to further research of a religious minority and Christians to ponder on the difficult and costly intersections of faith and culture.

Levi Miller is Director of the Congregational Literature Division at Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania.

FQ price—\$26.55
(Regular price—\$29.50)

A Dry Roof and a Cow: Dreams and Portraits of Our Neighbors, text by Katie Funk Wiebe and Christine Wiebe. Mennonite Central Committee, 1994. 150 pages, \$19.95, paperback.
Reviewed by Greg Voth

At a time when it seems as though everyone is assaulting us with messages and media bites, this quiet book comes as a refreshing surprise. I had expected it to be exploitative—providing a rock-hard, uneasy look into the State of the Human Condition, circa 1995. What I found instead was a contemplative collection of images and prose so simple and true that only a whisper was necessary to impart the message within. This is a wonderful book, depicting in sharp focus the grace and desires of our neighbors.



A Dry Roof and a Cow has captured the “needs” of our peoples across the globe—shelter for our families, food for our communities, and strong belief systems for the souls of our loved ones. The simplest dreams come too hard for too many, especially at this time when so many of us focus too much on “wants.”

The photographers and writers should be commended in their sharpness of focus and selection of subjects. It is refreshing to note that pictures accompanied by such simple prose can still move the heart of a viewer. That the people pictured within maintain such dignity while expressing themselves so eloquently should humble us all.

Greg Voth lives and works as an illustrator in New York City. His curiosity about his father's Mennonite roots brought him to review this book.

FQ price—\$15.96
(Regular price—\$19.95)

Going by the Moon and the Stars, Pamela E. Klassen. Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1994. 151 pages, \$25.00, paperback.

Reviewed by Julia Kasdorf

This book moved and inspired me as scholarly writing rarely does! Influenced by feminist and ethnographic research methods, Klassen's brave work gives human voice and specificity to historical facts in a way that traditional studies cannot. Eliciting the life stories of two Canadian Mennonite women born in the Soviet Union, she compares and interprets their tales.

The girls grew up with little formal religious training under Stalin's regime and were sustained by the faith of mothers who prayed in secret. During the German occupation in World War II, they collaborated with Nazis; then fleeing across war-ravaged Europe, they starved, were shot at, and lost their husbands and families. When they finally arrived in Canada, they found Mennonites who were leery of a single mother and unwilling to listen to war stories. Yet both women struggled to find faith and gain acceptance in their birthright religious community—where today one of the two even preaches sometimes.

What makes this more than just tales of suffering and survival is Klassen's insightful interpretation which focuses on faith, the importance of story, and individual agency. Both an engrossing text and model for the writing of new histories, this book should inspire other intelligent inquiries into Mennonite stories that have gone ignored and unrecorded.

Julia Kasdorf, who lives in Brooklyn, New York, is a poet and graduate student at New York University.

FQ price—\$22.50
(Regular price—\$25.00)



The Amish Struggle with Modernity, edited by Donald B. Kraybill and Marc A. Olshan. University Press of New England, 1994. 304 pages, \$17.95, paperback. Reviewed by Rodney J. Sawatsky

Here is an important contribution to the "culture wars" debate. While contending forces in this collection of essays are not the same as those described by analysts such as James Davidson Hunter, this war is most instructive to that other more public battle. Hunter's conservatives, such as the Christian Coalition, are fighting modernity. According to Kraybill and Olshan, the Amish also "are engaged in a war against the spirit of progress." While Hunter's conservatives are much more ambivalent about progress, their battlelines are often as ambiguous as those evidenced by the Old Order Amish. For both groups "their battle with modernity has been a struggle to save their cultured souls."

This, however, is not just another study characterizing the Amish clinging to the old and resisting all that is new. Rather the Amish interaction with modernity is self-conscious and controlled. Indeed, the book even argues that the Amish are true modernists. They seek to control their world rather than be controlled by it.

How can the Amish be both profoundly anti-modernist and arch-typical modernists? Unfortunately, the book does not address this apparent contradiction. Contrasting definitions of modernity are allowed to function side by side. The thesis of the volume, however, does suggest a simple resolution: as modernists the Amish choose to do battle with modernity. But is the "be not conformed" command then also a manifesto for modernity?

This is a provocative, first-rate study of the possibility of a culture war with the god of progress. The Amish may not be our model, but they may be a sign.

Rodney J. Sawatsky is President of Messiah College, Grantham, Pennsylvania.

FQ price—\$14.36
(Regular price—17.95)



Building on the Rock, Walfred J. Fahrner. Herald Press, 1995. 120 pages, \$7.95, paperback.

Reviewed by Lindsey Robinson

As a pastor, I appreciated reading Walfred Fahrner's *Building on the Rock*. It is a readable book on the ecclesiology of the believer's church, whose key characteristic is its intention to be a primary, alternative community of faith. Fahrner identifies eleven essential issues of congregational life and explains how each of these issues is foundational to what Anabaptists believe about the church and its structures.

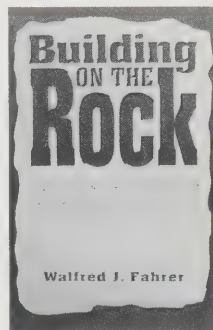
I was especially impressed with the chapters that deal with authority and leadership. In this relative and syncretistic age, we need to be constantly reminded that our value system must come from the teaching and example of Jesus, rather than from the blaring voices and seductive spirit of our culture. Fahrner calls for churches to respect pastoral leaders and allow them to lead. He calls for leaders to be accountable.

I agree that true conversion is life-encompassing and moves through the experience of the new birth into a lifelong commitment of faithfulness, but I had some concern with Fahrner's contention that, rather than looking for an experience to sustain commitment, we must make a commitment to sustain experience. This is a crucial issue which emphasizes a voluntary decision to follow the teachings of Jesus, while minimizing the call to personal conversion and new birth. From a pastoral perspective, a voluntary decision alone is not sufficient to address the great inner needs of people.

This book is practical for use in congregational settings. As a pastor, I am grateful for this resource. I will use it myself and recommend it to others.

Lindsey Robinson is pastor of Locust Lane Mennonite Church. He is also a staff person for the Congregational Resource Center of Lancaster Mennonite Conference.

FQ price—\$6.36
(Regular price—7.95)



Praying with the Anabaptists, Marlene Kropf and Eddy Hall. Faith and Life Press, 1994. 176 pages, \$12.95, paperback.

Reviewed by Arthur Paul Boers

In a time when most Christian traditions churn out prayer resources and even secular society is "into" spirituality, we have a dearth of Anabaptist resources on prayer. So the first thing to express about this book is heartfelt thanks. It does justice to Anabaptist priorities of nurturing a personal relationship with Jesus, committing oneself to living in a Christian community of faith, and following Christ's way of witness, service, and peacemaking.

Each chapter contains reflections on key passages from John 13-17 and insights, examples, and prayers of 16th century Anabaptists. There are also good prayer exercises derived from other Christian traditions: praying the scriptures, centering prayer, and discernment.

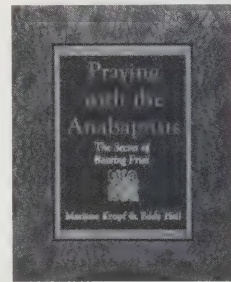
The book can be purchased with a cassette of hymns. But alas the hymns jar more than soothe and do not "quiet the heart" as promised: a good idea that did not work.

This book is worthwhile for individual or group use, and I appreciate the prayerful exposure to Anabaptist martyrs' experiences. It does not, however, teach how early Anabaptists actually prayed. (Does anyone know?) Astoundingly, *gelassenheit* (yieldedness), a quintessential 16th century Anabaptist emphasis, is not mentioned. That attitude is not well attuned to our culture and probably, therefore, all the more important.

Ironically, most of the book's endorsers are Roman Catholic! Perhaps the marketers hope to sell beyond Anabaptist circles. Such nit-picking aside, I hope this does well at least within the Anabaptist fold.

Arthur Paul Boers pastors the Bloomingdale (ON) Mennonite Church and is the author of several books, including *Lord, Teach Us to Pray*.

FQ price—\$10.36
(Regular price—12.95)



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Manitoba Artist's Installation Invites Interaction

During April and May of 1995, the Winnipeg (MB) Art Gallery invited Helene Dyck, Niverville, Manitoba, to show her recent body of work—*The Medicine Chest Project*. Consisting of three-dimensional wall pieces and free-standing forms that refer to the human body, each work is a construction which involves medicine cabinets with found objects and/or images. The objects and images are connected to or placed within the chests, all of which were either acquired by or given to Dyck.

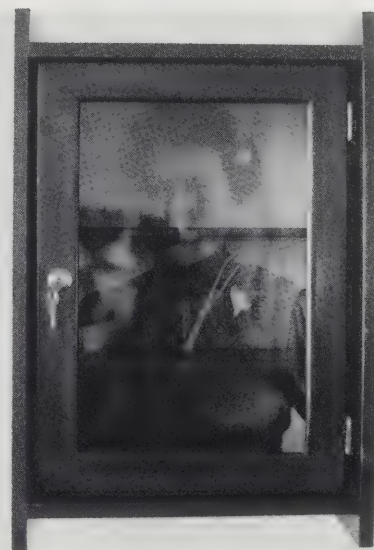
In an interview with *Festival Quarterly*, Dyck noted, "I am using the medicine chest as a metaphor. In our homes, it contains things which we believe will make us feel better, things which give us short-term relief. I asked myself, 'Are there things in society which we treat the same way? Have we allowed our social, political, and religious myths to promise wellness when they may only offer temporary relief?'" Dyck created 30 pieces, 22 of which

were installed in the Winnipeg exhibition.

In "Between the Lines" she literally stuffed the chest with needlework done by several generations of women in her family—her grandmother, mother, and herself. Each of the carefully crafted pieces is neatly folded and stacked. Dyck reflected, "I wondered if the hours and hours of creating those pieces could also have been spent in other pursuits." While Dyck acknowledges the strong feminist overtones in her work, she also works to connect with a universal audience.

At the Winnipeg installation, viewers were invited to interact with the pieces. "We encouraged people to open any doors and look inside the cabinets. I wanted people to touch the pieces."

People responded in a variety of ways. The Manitoba poet, Sarah Klassen, wrote a poem after having seen the exhibition. Dyck says, "While I received some very gratifying reviews, that was the response which touched



"Truncated" by Helene Dyck

me the most." Klassen gave the first public reading of the piece at the *Quiet in the Land?* conference on Anabaptist women at Millersville (PA) University in June 1995. —LS

Brown Sees Hope in Mennonites' Music Future



Tony Brown

Might it be true, that music, which has so often defined Mennonites, may be one instrument for enlarging the community's borders? Tony Brown, a Mennonite, a vocalist, and a psychotherapist from Seattle, Washington, believes he sees evidence of that happening.

"Mennonites are really trying to be more inclusive of other traditions, musically, these days," Brown stated in an interview with *Festival Quarterly*. "Music transcends culture,

and Mennonites are using music to reach across. In fact, Mennonites started doing that well ahead of other people.

"We do a lot of singing whenever we're together. And we are finding that we have the ability to expand. We're showing an ability to improvise, instrumentally and otherwise."

Brown himself moves among a variety of musical styles, whether he's performing or listening. He sings regularly with the Seattle Philharmonic Orchestra and orchestras of other nearby cities, participates monthly or more in recitals and oratorios, and has a weekly singing assignment in a church. He plans to produce a CD of African-American spirituals soon. "I will probably record it privately; then sell it as I do concerts and recitals. A label would be nice, but I'm not a known name!

"I need to be related to a lot of musical styles," Brown reflects. "I like jazz. I love the blues."

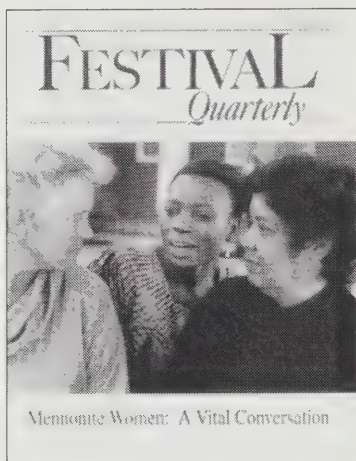
Brown is not among those who believe Mennonites are treating their

musical heritage cheaply, either by the music they select or the quality of their music-making. "I have no concerns about Mennonite musicianship. Mennonite kids are into music. They have enthusiasm and a whole lot of interest," he says confidently. "I have no concerns about there being music in our future. This [youthful] generation will bring music to us from many places. They will push us, force us to expand. Mennonites will always be making music—and good music."

—PPG



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QUARTERLY NEWS

"Art '95" at The People's Place Gallery

Special guest artists this year at The People's Place Gallery's annual art weekend—"Art '95"—will be Barbara Fast, Harrisonburg, Virginia, and Chad Friesen, Elkhart, Indiana. "Art '95" will be held Friday evening, November 3; the program will repeat on Saturday afternoon, November 4, 1995. Friesen will also open a showing of his work, "God's Eye Art" during the weekend.

Friesen paints with acrylic and has exhibited his work extensively in the Elkhart area. Because he has ataxia, a disease which affects his motor skills, Friesen needs extra stability under his arms to paint. Although he normally uses a wheelchair, he lies on the floor while painting, using two hands to hold his brush. Many of his pieces include a God's Eye symbol, which he began incorporating into his work after traveling in Jerusalem. Friesen will give an interview about his work.

Barbara Fast's presentation at "Art '95" is entitled "Fields of Vision: Personal Geography in Hand-Cast Paper." Although her background is in fiber-weaving and quiltmaking, she now works primarily in paper. A native



Barbara Fast

of Minnesota, Fast combines her ties with landscape and the quiltmaking tradition into her art. She teaches art at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg.

The weekend will also include the premiere showing of the "Art '95 Visual Survey," a slide presentation of works by Mennonite-related artists created during the past 24 months. The public is invited to attend. The program is offered twice: Friday evening begins at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday afternoon begins at 2:00 p.m. Tickets are \$5.00. Call The People's Place Gallery at 717-768-7171 for reservations or for more information.

—Joy Kraybill



Chad Friesen at work.

Assassins—Above-average thriller about a high-tech hit man who's being undercut by a younger competitor just when he wants out. (4)

Babe—A delightful, surprisingly captivating story about a pig who wants to be a sheep-dog. Adults may enjoy it even more than children. (8)

Beyond Rangoon—Picturesque adventure of a young American doctor on a sojourn to Burma, caught in the war in 1988. A bit boring and too heavy-handed—yet it's a beautiful trip. (4)

Dangerous Minds—A warmhearted story about an ex-Marine who puts her energy into being an inner-city schoolteacher. Not as gritty and hard-edged as one might expect, but worth your while. (7)

Devil in a Blue Dress—An excellent movie, set in black Los Angeles in 1948. A young man gets pulled into a web of intrigue and corruption, trying to keep his integrity and somehow survive. Superb drama about character in the middle of racism and the struggles of life in general. (9)

Hackers—Several young computer whiz kids take on a corporate bad guy who's trying to frame them. Has its moments. (4)

How to Make an American Quilt—A

major disappointment. Lacks focus, depth, story, and soul. A graduate student spends a summer with her grandmother and her quilting group. (5)

Jade—A dark, manipulative, and manipulated action-film about scandal and sex in high places. (2)

The Net—A lot of fun, mainly because of an outstanding performance by Sandra Bullock. She plays a stubborn, very bright computer whiz who uncovers a top-secret scam to destabilize public life. (7)

The Postman—A gentle gem. An Italian movie about a quiet peasant who discovers conversation, life, and love when a visiting poet takes time for him. (8)

The Scarlett Letter—It's not a classic, and it's only loosely based on Hawthorne's classic. But this film about forbidden love in an austere society has its moments. (6)

Seven—An intense but brutal mystery, shockingly and poetically etched against urban decay. A clever killer torments the police by punishing the seven deadly sins. (5)

Something to Talk About—A struggle between father and daughter, set in horse country. At times witty, at times a bit shallow. Decent acting by Julia Roberts and Robert Duvall. (6)

Steal Big, Steal Little—It's like a big Latino family squabble, see. And the same actor plays both brothers. At moments it pretends to be a poignant classic, but it's mainly a jumbled mess about a rich family battling over an estate. (5)

To Die For—A tragedy. With Nicole Kidman in the lead role, this could have been a classic comedy-tragedy. But it never leaves the station. A small-time reporter plots her way to the big time. (3)

The Usual Suspects—A delicious mystery drama, slowly unfolding, full of smoke and mirrors. Five professional thieves, a shipload of cocaine, and a determined interrogator. (7)

A Walk in the Clouds—By the director of *Like Water for Chocolate*, this passionate fantasy about two young people who pretend to be married for the protection of the young woman from her father—leads to love, conflict, and fire (of course). (6)

Waterworld—Forget all the press about this big budget picture. As a land-less adventure on the edge of civilization in the future, this film delivers thrills, surprises, and moments you've never anticipated. (6)

Films are rated from an adult FQ perspective on a scale from 1 through 9, based on their sensitivity, integrity, and technique.

A Gripping Adventure!

Lost River Conspiracy, by Dave Jackson

A gripping historical adventure, set in the West in the middle of a conflict with the Modoc Indians.

Shell-shocked and grieving, Abe Miller settled into the train to Kansas. His assignment? To find land for building farmsteads for Mennonites on the prairies. But an unlikely couple riding ahead of him detoured his plans—and his future.

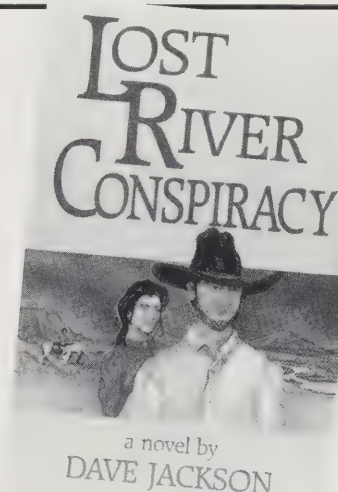
Captured by the young woman's beauty and strength—and incensed by her father's calloused intentions—Abe inserts himself into a long and broiling conflict that takes him to the Lava Beds for a showdown with the Modoc Indians.

A spiraling tornado destroyed Miller's family in Indiana. Now a devious and powerful landowner threatens to dismantle Miller's commitment to peaceful solutions.

Fueled more by idealism than wisdom, Abe Miller takes on Washington, a winter crossing of the desert, and the wooing of his greatest enemy's daughter. Set in the 1870s, this inspirational novel is based on an historical incident, the Modoc Indian War. *Lost River Conspiracy* is adventure and romance, full of wishes in its ending.

Dave Jackson has authored several dozen books. A juvenile fiction series by Jackson based on historical events has already sold more than 300,000 copies! This is the first in his new series for adults and teens.

5½ x 8½ • 220 pages • \$8.95, paperback



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BRETHREN SOCIETY

The Cultural Transformation of a "Peculiar People"

Carl F. Bowman

What happens when a tightly bound, admittedly "peculiar" religious group confronts an open and individualistic mainstream culture? What changes take place in the lives of believers when sameness, moral certainty, and exclusiveness encounter modern pluralism, tolerance, and inclusiveness? In this, the first book ever written on the subject, Carl Bowman examines how and why members of the Church of the Brethren—historically known as "Dunkers" after their method of baptism—were assimilated faster and earlier than their Amish, Mennonite, or even Hutterite cousins.

"Carl Bowman portrays the sweeping transformation after the mid-nineteenth century of the German Baptist Brethren or Dunkers (after 1908 known as the Church of the Brethren). This brilliant analysis will shape the interpretation of Brethren history for many decades." —Donald F. Durnbaugh, Elizabethtown College

512 pages, 59 illustrations \$19.95 paperback, \$65.00 hardcover

MENNONITE ENTREPRENEURS

Calvin Redekop, Stephen C. Ainlay, and Robert Siemens

Until recently, the phrase "Mennonite Entrepreneurs" might have seemed a contradiction in terms. But today, many members of this once-closed Anabaptist sect are more likely to ride to church in a BMW than a buggy. How did the Mennonites come to reconcile their religious beliefs with the economic opportunities of the modern era?

In *Mennonite Entrepreneurs* Calvin Redekop and his co-authors argue that Mennonite successes in the business world are the result of skillful adaptation of the sect's "communal ethic." In response to critics who maintain that entrepreneurial Mennonites have abandoned their faith in pursuit of an individualistic work ethic, the authors present evidence to show that even the most financially successful Mennonites are every bit as orthodox and committed to their faith as their less adventurous co-religionists. Based on one hundred interviews with Mennonite entrepreneurs, this book offers first-hand insights into the conflicts and tensions that characterize one religious sect's adaptation to the modern world.

"A pleasure to read: informative, insightful, and thought-provoking."—Marc Olshan, Alfred College

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AMISH ENTERPRISE

From Plows to Profits

Donald B. Kraybill and Steven M. Nolt

Amish culture has been rooted in the soil since its beginnings in 1693. But what happens when of the members of America's oldest Amish community enter non-farm work in one generation? How will hundreds of cottage industries and micro-enterprises reshape the heart of Amish life? *Amish Enterprise* is the first book to discuss the dramatic changes that will affect Amish communities throughout North America.

Based on interviews with more than 150 Amish entrepreneurs, the authors trace the rise and impact of micro-enterprises in Lancaster's Amish settlement over the past two decades. They document the proliferation of more than a thousand Amish-owned enterprises in the Lancaster area. Kraybill and Nolt explain why, at a time when the majority of new American business ventures fail, virtually all Amish businesses succeed. *Amish Enterprise* offers surprising insights into the cultural transformation of a plain people who are becoming increasingly entangled in the economic web of modern life.

240 pages, 43 illustrations \$14.95 paperback, \$45.00 hardcover

HUTTERITE BEGINNINGS

Communitarian Experiments during the Reformation

Werner O. Packull

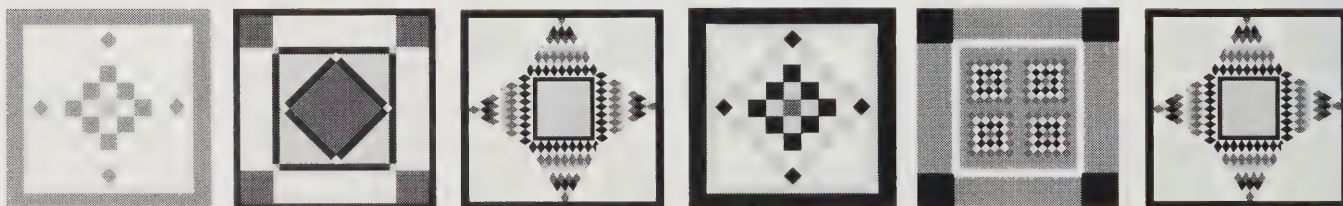
The oldest and largest communal society in North America, the Hutterites—Anabaptists of German origin, like the Amish—have long been the subject of scholarly study and popular curiosity. But while the group's present-day way of life in North Dakota and southern Canada has been extensively chronicled, no book has yet undertaken a detailed examination of the Hutterites' European origins. Now Werner Packull tells the comprehensive story of the Hutterite beginnings in their original homelands, particularly in Tyrol and Moravia.

"Packull makes a major breakthrough by showing how three early Anabaptist orders relate to each other, then laying bare the developing hermeneutic on which they were based. As a result, he gives us the best insight we have into worship practices of the earliest Anabaptists. In short, here is a rich list of pioneering, fresh discoveries and interpretations that will occupy scholars' attention for a long time to come."—John Oyer, Goshen College

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Stage Father

by Calvin Trillin

By now, my wife's policy on attending school plays (a policy that also covers pageants, talent shows, revues, recitals, and spring assemblies) is pretty well known: she believes that if your child is in a school play and you don't go to every performance, including the special Thursday matinee for the fourth grade, the county will come and take the child. Anyone who has lived for some years in a house where that policy is strictly observed may have fleeting moments of envy toward people who have seen only one or two productions of "Our Town."

One evening this spring, though, as we walked into an auditorium and were handed a program filled with the usual jokey resumes of the participants and cheerful ads from well-wishers, it occurred to me that this would be the last opportunity to see one of our children perform in a school theatrical event. That view was based partly on the fact that the child in question is twenty-six years old. She was about to graduate from law school. I was assuming that the J.D.s slogging through the bar-exam cram course would not decide to break the tedium with, say, a production of "Anything Goes."

As I waited for the curtain to go up on the 1995 New York University Law Revue, entitled "The Law Rank Redemption," I found myself thinking back on our life as parental playgoers. I realized that I couldn't recall seeing either of our daughters in one of those classic nursery-school-pageant roles—as an angel or a rabbit or an eggplant. I thought I might be experiencing a failure of memory—another occasion for one of my daughters to say, as gently as possible, "Pop, you're losing it"—but they have confirmed that their nursery school was undramatic, except on those occasions when a particularly flamboyant hair puller was on one of

*I realized
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his rampages.

I do recall seeing one or the other of them as an Indian in "Peter Pan" and as the judge in "Trial by Jury" and as Nancy in "Oliver!" and as the narrator (unpersuasively costumed as a motorcycle tough) in "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat" and as a gondolier in "The Gondoliers." We heard their voices in a lot of songs, even if a number of other kids were sometimes singing at the same time. We heard "Dites-moi pourquoi" sung sweetly and "Don't tell Mama" belted out. All in all, we had a pretty good run.

I don't want to appear to be one of those parents who dozed through the show unless his own kid was in the spotlight. To this day, when I hear "One singular sensation," from "A Chorus Line," I can see Julia Greenberg's little brother, Daniel, doing a slow, almost stately tap-dance interpretation in high-topped, quite tapless sneakers. I'm not even certain what my own girls did in the grade-school talent show at P.S. 3 which I remember mainly for the performance of the three Korn brothers. One of

them worked furiously on a Rubik's cube while his older brother accompanied him on the piano. The youngest brother, who must have been six or seven, occasionally held up signs that said something like "Two Sides to Go" or "One Side to Go." I have always had a weakness for family acts.

I won't pretend that all school performances were unalloyed joy. We used to go every year to watch our girls tap-dance in a recital that also included gymnastics, and the gymnastics instructor was an earnest man who seemed intent on guarding against the possibility of anyone's getting through the evening without a thorough understanding of what goes into a simple somersault. He described each demonstration in such excruciating detail that I used to pass the time trying to imagine him helplessly tangled in his own limbs as the result of a simple somersault that had gone wrong:

"Untie me," he is saying.

"Not until you take an oath of silence," I reply.

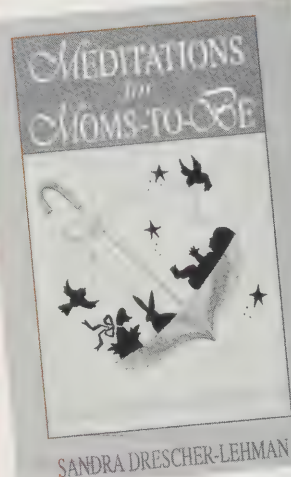
Even so, I came to believe over the years that my wife's policy on school plays, which sounds extreme, actually makes sense. It used to be that whenever young couples asked me if I had any advice about rearing children I'd say, "Try to get one that doesn't spit up. Otherwise you're on your own." I finally decided, though, that it was O.K. to remind them that a school play was more important than anything else they might have had scheduled for that evening. I realized that school plays were invented partly to give parents an easy opportunity to demonstrate their priorities. If they can get off work for the Thursday matinee, I tell them, all the better.

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Meditations for Moms-to-Be, by Sandra Drescher-Lehman

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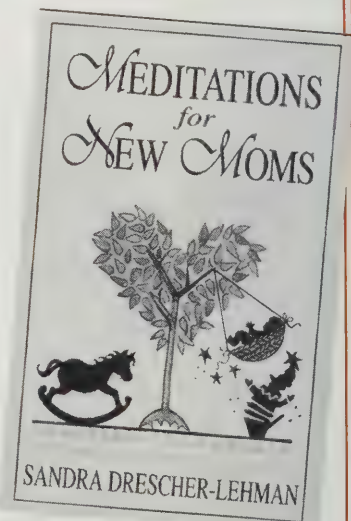
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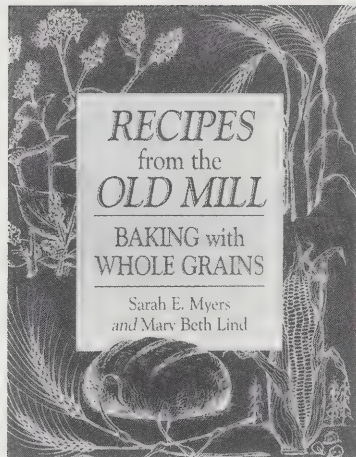
FESTIVAL

Quarterly



Piety and Poverty: Stories of Growing Up, page 7

NEW from GOOD BOOKS



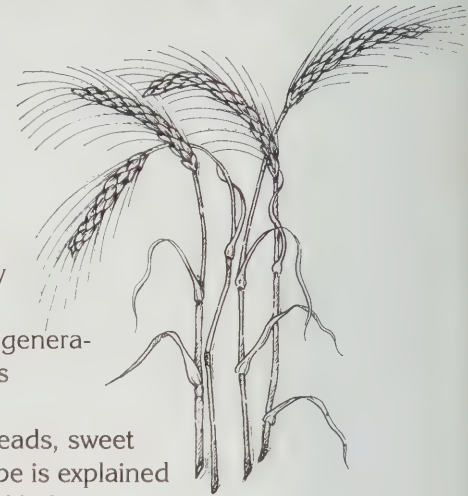
Recipes from the Old Mill: Baking with Whole Grains by Sarah E. Myers and Mary Beth Lind

Simple grains yield rich breads that range from the mystically light to the substantially chewy. These breads offer incontestable food value and flavor; they will satisfy and delight those sensitive to nutritional concerns.

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A NonChurchgoer's Guide to the Bible by Michael Gantt

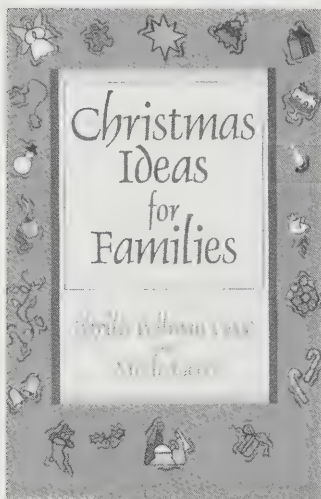
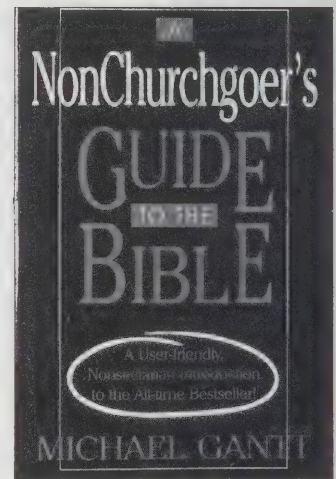
This easy-to-read, user-friendly guide to the all-time bestselling book (the Bible) takes a fresh, nonsectarian approach.

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Christmas Ideas for Families by Phyllis Pellman Good and Merle Good

These practical but inspirational ideas come from families who have used them. Requiring little artistic skill or outlay of money, these ideas bring Christmas celebrations to households of any size or age. They offer wonderful ways to be together and to begin new traditions as families.

Here are Advent ideas, decorating suggestions that include everyone, food for the whole season, managing shopping, sensitive gift-giving for inside and outside the family, celebrations for the extended family, what to do on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, and ways to stay joyful and energetic through it all.

5½ x 8½ • 156 pages • \$9.95, paperback



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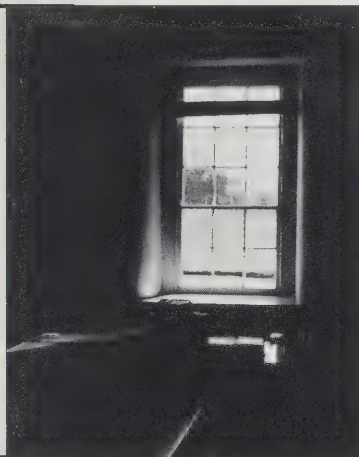
Quarterly

on the cover . . .

Writing charitably and yet graphically about growing up poor and Mennonite, Bruce Martin selects three stories from his childhood.

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cover photos by Jim King



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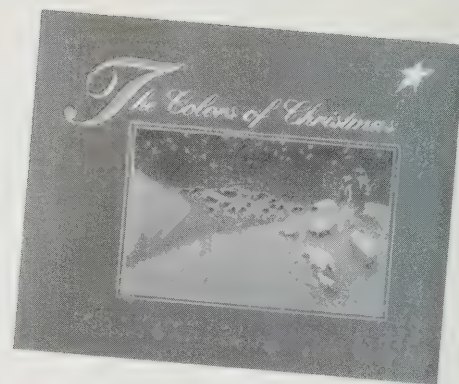
The Colors of Christmas

by **Martha N. Phifer**

illustrated by Judy I. Roberts

See the red fire that warms the shepherds and the green hills where their sheep graze. Look at the purple-clad kings, their brown camels, and the silver light of the Bethlehem star. Rhymed text by Phifer and lively illustrations by Roberts provide a unique picture of Christ's birth. A picture storybook for ages 4 to 8.

Paper, 32 pages, \$6.95; in Canada \$9.95.



Let's Make a Garden

by **Tamara Awad Lobe**

Brown beans from Mexico grow beside an orange tree from Swaziland, as boys and girls from 11 nations make a garden. Xiau Liu from China brings rice, Nirmala from India offers spices, and Hans from Holland provides bright red tulips. Creative illustrations bring alive this story of hope and sharing for ages 4 to 8.

Paper, 40 pages, \$7.95; in Canada \$11.35.



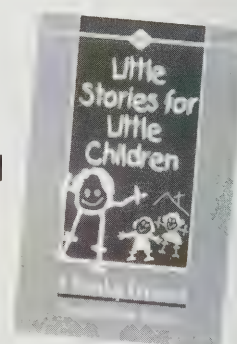
Little Stories for Little Children:

A Worship Resource

by **Donna McKee Rhodes**

A resource for adults who understand that children need a special time in worship to learn they are loved and accepted by God and their Christian community. Indexes of story titles, Scripture references, objects, and themes will help you find a story suitable for any setting.

Paper, 128 pages, \$7.95; in Canada \$11.35.



Rosanna of the Amish (Centennial Edition)

by **Joseph W. Yoder**

illustrated by Joy Dunn Keenan

Rosanna of the Amish tells the unusual true story of an Irish orphan, Rosanna McGonegal, who was initiated into Amish ways and customs by Elizabeth Yoder, an unmarried Amish woman. This edition appears 100 years after the death of Rosanna and is freshly edited throughout, with new foreword, maps, illustrations, and bibliography. Now in its 37th printing; over 400,000 copies in print!

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FESTIVAL *Quarterly*

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Phyllis Pellman Good, Merle Good

EDITORIALS

Can a Belief Survive If It Isn't Tested?

Recently I spoke to an alert, engaging, and very varied group, gathered from all over North America. I was trying to introduce to them the various beliefs and practices of our faith family, acknowledging the great span of practice from the Old Order to the most progressive on many different beliefs.

Sometimes when one speaks openly, confessionally, instead of from a bureaucratic, public relations attitude, an audience will respond with great feeling and vulnerability. These persons came from many walks of life and from the whole gamut of faiths and non-faiths. They were more taken with the Old Order commitments than with the more progressive relativity. But behind all that they asked was a major, common question—"What are these people's ideals? How do they try to practice those ideals? And, candidly, how's it working out?"

Only honest answers count in such a setting. We would want as much if we were hearing a presentation about the Jesuits or the Mormons or the Orthodox Jews. Most humans possess sufficient radar to sense when they're being fed a public relations line, or when the truth is emerging, however painful.

We talked about the gap between what we profess and how we practice. We spoke of the task of passing on values to the next generation. We reflected on the meaning of being in the world but not of the world. Then we turned to the question of whether a belief can survive if it isn't tested.

A people who've suffered and been persecuted often pray for a time of respite and peace, free of tribulation. But what happens if their prayers are answered? Can a group maintain its core identity and beliefs if they aren't tested?

We discussed this observation as it relates to all our people. If the government no longer bothers us for our Christian practices, how can we maintain our identity? Interestingly, the Old Order way of life with horse-drawn carriages, caution on higher education and on Social Security, as well as its commitment to conscientious objection, keeps the line between the church and the world and between the church and the state quite clear.

The more progressive groups have abandoned most distinctives, with the main exception of peace. But with no military draft, most modern Mennonite young people don't face the questions—their beliefs are no longer tested by the draft. And by most reports, many young people are no longer clear where they stand.

So is it a blessing when God answers prayers and removes the hurdles which test our beliefs and convictions? Can a belief stay strong if it isn't tested and articulated?

Can we create ways to test ourselves? Or is that all artificial? Is melting into the mainstream the blessing of our beliefs not being tested? —MG

Premature Obituary

We're about to enter our 23rd year of publication as a magazine. And it's amusing to observe that the death of print media (magazines, newspapers, and books) is being predicted now as confidently as it was in 1974.

The advent of television, film, and video, it used to be said, would make the cumbersome, antiquated task of reading obsolete. And the computer, with all of its endless, dazzling capabilities, would render reading from printed paper (books, magazines, etc.), rather than from a screen, an undesirable task.

Yet books and magazines thrive. The big trend in book selling is the arrival of large superstores such as Borders and Barnes and Noble. These superstores are not located in malls, but have become

destinations themselves. Shoppers spend an hour or two in these sprawling places, browsing, reading, and buying.

Perhaps a book or magazine still enjoys an advantage over the computer. Snuggling into a corner to enjoy a good novel is an experience neither the video nor the computer can match. Books are portable, easy to dip in and out of, and friendly. Books and magazines are a relief from the demanding nature of the computer and the television screen. Reading a book is more quiet, more personal, and more movable.

Some will debate that. And the common myth will continue to write the obituary for print media. But 23 years later, I am neither frightened nor convinced. —MG

A VISUAL FEAST



THE PEOPLE'S PLACE GALLERY

If you would like to see a cross-section of some of the finest work being done by Mennonite-related artists, just write to us for the 15-minute slide presentation called "Art '95." This is a service provided free of charge by our Gallery. The artists represented in "Art '95" are:

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LETTERS

I received your memo for renewal yesterday and want to renew my subscription. I enjoy your publication very much and do recommend it to my friends. My husband and I appreciated the "Video Review" edition. Thank you!

Elfrieda Friesen
Edmonton, Alberta

I was delighted to receive your "Video Guide," and read with interest your background in film production and your interest in film ratings.

Claude Stevanus
Sugarcreek, Ohio

Guess I don't want to let you bear all the heat, Merle, in terms of your asking some searching questions, not only in relation to the *process* of the integration discussion/recommendation, but (from my perspective) far more the underlying rationale of institutional preservation and tired programming.

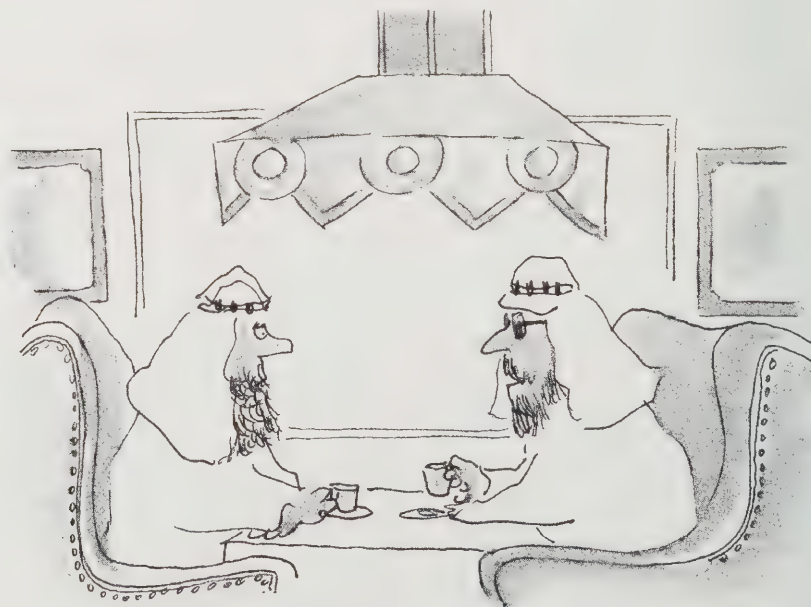
It seems to me that (in at least our General Conference) we are in a rut of banality and make-work projects that are generated somewhere (I don't know where—I just know that they don't reflect our work, priorities and agendas at local congregational levels—at least not here in Saskatchewan). In the past ten years or so we have had Congregational Goals Discovery Plan, Call to Kingdom Commitments, Passing on the Vision (a Guide to

Congregational Discipleship), Friendship Evangelism, the LIFE program (whoops—"process"), and now Vision: Healing and Hope. Each has elaborately staged plans for implementation (virtually clones of the preceding program); no sooner (it seems) does a congregation begin work on implementing one than the next program/process comes along. If we were to concentrate on each of these as the programs call for, where is there time and energy for pursuing congregational initiatives and local opportunities for witness and growth?

So, Merle, I feel your points are well taken, at least as judged by the defensiveness of the respondents, and I think the real malaise lies still deeper than just the process involved in voting. We have lost our vision and mission, and substituted programs and planning sessions and gimmicky workbook procedures (pouring offerings received into a large basin? Help!!).

Vern Ratzlaff
Saskatoon, SK

The editors welcome letters. Letters for publication must include the writer's name and address and should be sent to Festival Quarterly, 3513 Old Philadelphia Pike, Intercourse, PA 17534. The editors regret that the present volume of mail necessitates publishing only a representative cross-section. Letters are subject to editing for reasons of space or clarity.



"Through it all we're still heavily invested in oil—primarily Picasso and Rembrandt."

PIETY *and* POVERTY: *Stories of Growing Up*

by Bruce D. Martin

Recently the Multi-Cultural Committee at Eastern Mennonite University invited me to talk about my culture. When I objected, they said, “Just tell stories from your own experience of growing up.” Like heavy fog in a mountain valley, the notion has lingered deep in my soul that I have no culture, that I am a man without a culture.

Having felt this way most of my life, I took the *Oxford English Dictionary* down from its place over my desk to see what culture really is. (I admit that I bought the *Oxford English Dictionary* a few years ago when I suspected that I neither had a culture nor was cultured.) I had once seen the gargantuan volumes sitting on someone’s shelf who was unquestionably a person of culture. I suppose I got some satisfaction from knowing I could at least buy some culture. At the time, it seemed to be a step in the right direction.

The word “culture” was first used by Pallad around 1420 in reference to animal husbandry, and then to cultivating and tilling the soil. (Apparently no one before the fifteenth century had had any culture either.) Having spent the first 10 years of my life on several unproductive farms, I was barefoot familiar with plowing fields, caring for cattle, and weeding the garden.

In 1483, Caxton used the word “culture” in reference to worship and piety (“reverential homage”). If one thing was as familiar to me as tilling the soil, it was going to church, worshiping, and practicing the kind of piety common to conservative rural Mennonites. Perhaps I had more culture than I realized.

But then, in 1510, More used the word “culture” figuratively in reference to “cultivating or developing the mind, faculties, and manners,” which meant “refinement and improvement by education.” Just when I thought I might fit in, all was now lost. If I knew anything at all, I knew deep in my soul that, in this sense, I was a man *in search of* culture. Some may be blessed by being multi-cultural, but I had yet to find even *one*. In fact, having attended small rural public schools in northcentral Wisconsin and a remote one-room schoolhouse near the Ojibwa Indian Reservation on the Northwest Angle of Lake of the Woods near

Kenora, Ontario, I suspected that I might even be *acultural* when it came to education and refinement. Graduating from the eighth grade with four other students and from high school with 17 classmates, I found college to be an abstraction. For my parents, it was a *distraction* from real work, the meaning of life intended for their children.

Hard manual labor, a rigid conservative piety, and a lack of education and refinement—the very definition of culture in this figurative sense—characterized my years of growing up. One final strand completed my cultural identity—poverty, abject rural poverty. In a family of 14 children, I lived most of my childhood in one- or two-bedroom houses. On the reservation, I lived in a two-room 75-year-old log cabin without any modern conveniences, neither running water nor electricity. Though sociologists may not agree on the meaning of the term, mine was a culture of poverty. This understanding, though not among the *Oxford English Dictionary’s* definitions of culture, seemed more definitive than all the others combined.

Poverty is painful, brutally so, especially for children. All of my childhood years were lived in poverty. In 1959, nearly 28 percent of all American children were victims of poverty as defined by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. By 1970, the year I graduated from high school, that figure had been cut in half to about 13 or 14 percent. By 1990, the number of children affected by poverty had again grown to over 20 percent and is today nearing the 1959 figure of 28 percent. These figures are alarming when one knows, as I do, just how cruel and demoralizing poverty can be.

The stories that follow point to the significant strands which made up the culture of my life while I was growing up, especially the relationship between piety and poverty. I do not intend to ridicule faith, certainly not the strong faith and the rich love I received from my parents and am nurtured by today. But I am still uneasy when I realize how piety, frequently and unwittingly, reinforced the pain of poverty in my life as a child.

FURY

As we drove home from church that dismal afternoon, the sky was overcast gray, as was the mood in the car and around the dinner table. Low-hanging clouds, the color of rattlesnake weed, boiled across the sky during the afternoon, pressing upon the cold landscape a darkness so heavy I could feel its weight as I trudged to the barn to do the evening chores. Foul weather, foul moods, and the foul stench of those despicable restless beasts, made the familiar routines exceedingly weighty in the dim shadows of the old barn. I completed my many tasks, then slouched across the unlit yard, watching the ominous clouds swirl around the barn, scud across the cornfield into the forested darkness beyond. I turned and raced for the house, hoping to get there ahead of the breaking storm.

Frightened by the crashing thunder and tearing lightning, Goldie, our beloved collie, whimpered and lunged for the door and safety of the farmhouse foyer. I caught her long, shaggy coat and led her to safety under the broken-down porch just as the deluge broke. In seconds, our unseeded lawn became a muddy torrent, gathering in deepening pools in the cattle yard near the barn.

My three brothers and I all turned up in the mudroom and began to remove our outer clothing. The door suddenly burst open. Driven by the wind and rain, my father charged in, sputtering and drenched to the bone. Seeing this to be her last chance, Goldie bolted through the open door, nearly knocking him off his feet. She sat trembling behind the mudroom door.

Grim-faced and muttering, my father reached quickly for the cowering dog, groped for the collar buried beneath her matted coat, and jerked her, choking, from behind the door. Reaching just as quickly, fluidly, with the other hand for the cast-iron bootjack, he raised the club and brought it down with crushing force on Goldie's head. Screaming in silence, I watched helplessly as she was struck, blow after blow. Finally he released her. She fell, crumpled, to the floor as what remained of her life gathered in a thick red puddle around her head. Extending her paws, as if searching for a way through the darkness, she shuddered, stiffened, and was still.

Standing motionless in his manure-covered, blood-splattered coveralls, my father stared, detached, at his calloused hands, his breathing heavy and ragged. Finally, taking hold of Goldie's leg, he dragged her through the foyer, opened the door and dumped her body over the side of the porch into the mud and water below. I stared at the swash of blood on the grimy linoleum floor and winced when Goldie's head bounced over the threshold and disappeared. With my eyes watering, ears pounding, and lungs surging into my throat, I swallowed, turned my back, and finished removing my chore clothes.

"What're you bawlin' about?" my father asked, his voice raspy, barely audible. "Dog never was no good anyhow. Never did learn how to trail cattle. Wouldn't even chevy a squirrel. Now get yourself cleaned up 'fore I give you something to bawl about."

As the storm subsided, its fury spent, I got myself ready for Sunday evening services. The small congregation began singing, "Marvelous grace of our loving Lord . . . there where the blood of the lamb was spilt." Slumped forward, staring hard, my father's eyes began to melt, leaving little dark pools on the hardwood floor. In my soul another storm began to rage, forming a whirlpool of confusion and fear which finally spilled over, uncontrollably, during the third stanza, flooding the old yellowed birch pew.

CAVITIES

With June-bug predictability, we went to church at least three times every week. We met in a tiny white country church, stuccoed inside and out, trimmed in yellow pine. Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday night, and often for all-day and revival meetings in between. Our parents herded us together like so many Holstein calves in our dark pants, properly buttoned white shirts, and bare feet. With eight packed into the rear seat and three straddling the hump wedged in between my parents on the front bench seat, the dilapidated old gray 1955 Plymouth lurched down the dusty corduroy lane, beginning the 18-mile drive to North Fork Mennonite Church.

When one is poor, money is no object. The gas tank of the dejected Plymouth was topped off from the rusting gas tank standing near the unpainted barn. Tightly knotted into the corners of 11 homemade handkerchiefs was 22 cents, two pennies for each child old enough to be aware of the offering plate. Beg, borrow, or steal, the Martin tribe was accounted for, filling nearly two pews with stair-stepped precision.

Regular church attendance causes cavities—torturous physical and emotional pain. With every passing Sunday that I sat on those old yellowing birch pews, my bright, white smile also yellowed and faded until, finally, it disappeared altogether. I learned, in church and in school, to smile with my mouth closed to hide the pain.

“We have to do something about the boy’s teeth,” my mother pleaded.

“We don’t have the money for anything extra right now,” my father replied sharply.

“But I can tell he’s in a lot of pain. Can’t you see it’s hard for him to go to school that way?” my mother countered.

“If we can hold out till fall, we’ll sell a couple of the calves. Maybe something can be done then. The corn may do better than last year. We’ll have to wait and see,” my father said authoritatively.

The fall months, and then years, passed without sufficient sales to bring about the smile’s return. Three times each week, week after week, we drove the 36-mile roundtrip to church, totaling nearly 6,000 miles and \$600 per year (@ .10 per mile). During the ride and while sitting in church, my throbbing teeth disappeared. In physical and emotional pain, I stopped wanting to go to school. In the fourth grade, I received my first toothbrush and a small tube of Ipana toothpaste, compliments of the U.S. government. It was too little, too late. If the small tube of paste was ever used, it was never replaced. Like my smile, the brush also disappeared.

Dental hygiene was never the sermon topic in church. But in tenth grade health class, not only did I receive a toothbrush and toothpaste, I was taught the basics of dental care. Even more important, I was given free appointments to the local dentist, again, compliments of the federal government. Many appointments later, my teeth and smile reconstructed, I began interacting with my peers, making friends, and performing better in school. A year later, I found the courage to ask Lila out for a real date.

It seems painfully clear to me, that the Mennonite Secretary General ought to issue a warning to every small church located in Povertytown, U.S.A.: Warning: Regular Church Attendance May Cause Cavities, Especially Among Children, And In Other Ways Be Hazardous To Your Health.



THE BLUE-EYED CHIEF

As reliable as the annual mayfly infestation, several Ojibwa families returned to Windigo on Lake of the Woods for the summer fishing season. Windigo, humps of sturgeon gray granite and twisted jack pine, is a cluster of small islands between the Northwest Angle and French Portage, along the pristine blue Ontario-Minnesota border. John and Arrowroot Blackhawk, tribal elders, struggled proudly to maintain the traditions and rhythms of the Ojibwa people.

My father and I often stopped to visit with our friends after spending the day fishing, guiding, or building log houses. Near the pier stood the Blackhawks' canoe birch wigwam, tattletale gray like the throat of a whiskey jack, a mass of intertwining poles protruding from the top. The gigantic wigwam, like a benevolent bearwalk, kept vigilant watch over the island clans. Usually Arrowroot would be preparing the evening meal of fish stew over an outdoor fire. While my father graciously accepted a cup of black coffee, I'd count fish heads, their eyes vacuous and glazed, as they boiled to the surface in the blackened kettle hanging over the outdoor fire.

Sitting on a block of pine, my father would wait for John to emerge from the wigwam. I would watch the opening for the first sign of movement. If John emerged, I'd take off like an arrow from a bow, heading for the cluster of cabins at the far end of the island. I knew I'd have an hour to spend with my friends—the Sandys, Whiteheads, Little-Trees, Kellys, and Three-Baskets. I'd hear my father's voice trailing after me, "Bruce, be back in an hour. We have to get home before dark." Dodging through the gill-net racks, I'd cut across a small field of tickling foxtail, giggling until I reached the sloping feldspar ledge on the other side just below the Little-Trees' cabin.

Coming out onto the rocks above the water's edge, I'd stop long enough to catch my breath and take in the beauty of this strategic promenade. To the southwest, as far as I could see, the water green stretched to join the sky blue melding together, an indistinct emerald horizon. Turning to the northeast, the direction of my Angle Inlet home, I could see massive Fort St. Charles, a tiny brown speck against the green forested shoreline. This spot always caught me off guard, the pause itself a prayer of delight in the beauty and wonder of God's creation.

Still breathing hard, I'd race up the rocky slope to the cabin, yelling, "Ricky, Leslie, Becky . . . hey, anybody home?" The ritual of yelling was unnecessary since there were no windows in the Sandy's cabin. The old rotting one-room cabin kept a family of 10 relatively safe from the elements during the summer months. The older family members would often gather around to watch us during the first few minutes of play, amused by the sight of this small, light-skinned, towheaded boy among the brown-skinned, raven-haired children of

Windigo Island. We romped, we giggled, we screamed across creation toward a carefree eternity, or so it seemed.

On this particular day, as my father and I approached Windigo Island, the sun, a brilliant golden wickiup squatting and teetering on the edge of the earth, cast golden flecks across the shimmering water as far as the eye could see. Cutting the outboard motor, with our wake pushing us gently toward the pier, my father scanned the rows of battered boats, taking stock of who was home and who might still be out on the lake pulling nets and counting jackfish.

"John's boat is out," my father said, sitting back on the damp boat cushion. "Must be having a good day," he continued.

John's old boat had been patched and painted many times. During its most recent refurbishing, one more layer of brilliant S O S green paint had been applied. My father said it reminded him of the antiquated neon jukebox in Yellow Cloud's beano hall on Enchanted Island. Just as loud and annoying, too. Both knew it was a fine vessel, its broad beam carrying it high in rough seas and providing stability when pulling in the gill-nets.

Zizania, the Blackhawks' elkhound, loped soundlessly down to the water's edge to meet us as our boat bumped gently against the makeshift pier. I dropped the bow rope over the nearest post, securing it fast with a couple of half hitches.

"Hang around, Bruce," my father said, stepping out onto the pier. "If John's not home, we won't be staying long. Be dark soon." Under his arm he carried a box of nonfat dry milk wrapped in plastic. "For the Whitehead babies," he continued. "They're not doing well you know."

My father and I walked side by side toward the Blackhawk wigwam where Arrowroot stood, bent, washing dishes in the familiar cast-iron kettle hanging over the embers of the evening fire. A needle thin wisp of smoke drifted west toward Moose Bay. The familiar stench of rotting fish hung heavy in the air.

My father greeted her in Ojibwa and handed her the milk. "Guess John must still be out on the lake, eh? Must've gotten in a good run."

"Oh, no, Mr. Martin, not so," Arrowroot countered in her halting English. "John yesterday lost . . . oh, I sorry. No talk now. You talk to John," she said, motioning toward the wigwam.

"Thank you, Aerroot. I will," my father responded warmly. His tongue always knotted up when he said her name. Her quick laughter was forgiving. Glancing in the direction of the wigwam, he asked, "Should I go in?"

"Please go, Mr. Martin. John talk now," Arrowroot said, smiling. I liked to see Mrs. Blackhawk smile. In her late 70s, her face was weathered by long days out-of-doors and deeply wrinkled around her clear black



*Then he began to hum,
his body moving rhythmically from side to side.*

eyes. When she smiled, a thousand crow's-feet seemed to dance across her face, one for every year of her long, hard, and fruitful life. I was hoping I'd get to sit with Arrowroot by the fire, but my father motioned as if to say, "Come along, Bruce."

Pushing through the opening of the wigwam, we saw John sitting as straight and supple as a willow before a small fire in the center of the room. Exchanging greetings in Ojibwa, he motioned for us to sit.

"Good to see you, John," my father grunted as he squatted beside John. "Thought you might be out with the nets when I didn't see your boat down at the pier."

John didn't respond. He stared at the tiny flame as it licked the snow-white bark of a birch sapling. Suddenly wrapping itself around the birch twig, the flame flared up, sizzled, and devoured the twig in the heat of passion.

"I lost the boat," John whispered. Turning to look my father in the eye, he shrugged and said, "Just like that, she's gone."

"Lost the boat, John! How in Sam Hill?" My father moved closer. "We haven't had bad weather for days. Did you run 'er on some rocks? Tell me, John, what happened?"

John turned toward the fire to avert my father's gaze. The fire snapped and crackled as John broke off pieces of birch twig, dropping them deliberately one after the other into the flames. He was silent for a long time.

My father waited quietly while I scanned the room's interior. Above John's head, suspended from a bent sapling fastened to the wigwam wall, hung a blue and gold cloth, an ugly knife attached to a shank of coarse rope, a few dried herbs, a bear root necklace, and several other curiosities. On a buckskin thong hung an ornamented pouch covered with stiff black bristles. Four sallow-tipped claws appeared to be reaching for John's bowed head. A band of moose hide encircled the pouch just above the claws, its edges decorated with alternating green, blue, and white beads. A beaded figure, half human, half eagle, held a cord attached to a circle enclosing the sun.

I had caught glimpses of the paw a few times before, always partially obscured by John's shirt or jacket. My father had explained, when I saw it the first time, that John had received the medicine bag 40 years earlier during his initiation into the fourth and highest level of the Midewiwin, the Grand Medicine Society of the Ojibwa.

The blanket rustled beneath me as I squirmed to get a better look at the enormous paw. "Dad, look up there," I whispered, pointing excitedly. "The bear paw. He doesn't have it on." He scowled at me in the silence.

Finally, John heaved a great sigh and said, "The Blue-Eyed Chief finally got her. It was the Blue-Eyed Chief."

Though nothing more really needed to be said, John slowly and painfully recounted the events of the past two days. Charley McCabe, wealthy owner of the largest summer resort in the region, with a reputation for

meanness, abused and ridiculed the Ojibwa people whenever possible. He mockingly called himself the Blue-Eyed Chief, an insult to the entire Ojibwa nation. Twisting the knife in the back of our friends, he had recently built a huge bar and dance hall which he named the Blue-Eyed Chief, making it the center of his posh resort for Falcon Island's summer tourists. He bought fish or anything else that turned a profit from anyone who would sell, but always for a fraction of its value.

Needing some quick cash, John had taken a load of whitefish over to Falcon Island. After he made the sale, John stopped by the Blue-Eyed Chief for a drink. When morning came, John's earnings were gone, and the Blue-Eyed Chief had a bill of sale bearing his signature for the boat and motor. Adding insult to injury, McCabe gave John an IOU for his night's lodging and taxi service back to Windigo Island.

"I'm sorry, John. It's not right. He's a thief. How can he keep getting away with this?" my father asked rhetorically, unable to conceal his growing rage. "He built his entire business by taking advantage of people. We both know that, John. If it's not the boats, it's the chain saws, the nets, the canoes. He built that resort with your building materials," my father exclaimed, rising to his feet. "He can't do this, John. Let's go over and get this straightened out . . . now."

Reaching over, John gripped my father's arm firmly in his big calloused hand, pulling him back to earth. When my father sat down again, John said quietly, "She was such a good boat, my friend. For more than 30 years she provided for me and my family. I know . . . shouldn't have let this happen. I let her way down. Would've been better to load her with rocks, resting her in Monument Bay. At her age, she wouldn't have held hard feelings. Why didn't the lake open up and swallow her? If only she would've gone down in a storm, but . . ."

His voice trailing off, John leaned over the fire with his face in his hands. The flame spluttered as an enormous tear slid down between his fingers, lighting upon it. My father leaned close, put his hand on John's shoulder, bowed his head, and began to pray. Time stopped and the earth stood still as his words rose like crystal into the clear night sky.

Finally John stretched out his arm, grasped the old bear paw, slipped his head through the thong and tucked it under his shirt. Then he began to hum, low and slow at first, like the drumming of a ruffed grouse, his body moving rhythmically from side to side. Gradually the volume increased, his voice rising and falling like the waters of the bay in a gale. Then he began to sing, unintelligible words of life and creation, the power of Makwa Manido welling up and mingling with the cool night winds and the spirit of Windigo.

Bruce Martin is now Campus Pastor of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

On Having an Empty/Open Nest

by Jewel Showalter

I wrote the first “Family Creations” column for *Festival Quarterly* from California in 1975 when Matthew was small enough to pass as Baby Jesus in our homemade creche. Now 20 years later as Christmas approaches, he’s off traveling in Turkey, Bulgaria, and Moldova. He plans to be home for the holidays but probably won’t be staying around long. Rhoda got married last year and lives in Ohio. Chad lives in Flint, Michigan.

When we moved to Pennsylvania in the summer of 1994, none of our children moved with us. They had become young adults with lives of their own. And we want it that way, but we still miss them. For 24 years many of our decisions revolved around their schedules.

Now they’re like kites, up there out of sight, and we wonder if we still have a hold of the string or if we even should. No, that’s not a good word picture. What about birds? That’s what the nest metaphor is all about. They’ve flown off, but they have good instincts and can always come back if they wish.

But they’re also busy building their own nests—and we’re helping them. Last summer when Rhoda and her husband gutted and remodeled a little old house, Rhoda’s father, Richard, did the drywall. But that means, of course, that our nest takes on a different role. And that’s what we’re trying to discover.

What do we do with the empty bedrooms, the boxes of grade school papers and prizes, the drawings of curios, and the clothes saved “just in case”? What do we do with the time we used to give to their nurture and friendship? How do we stay in touch without trying to reel in the kite? (Sorry, I said that wasn’t a good metaphor!)

All along the way I’ve told myself not to wish away any stage—not even teething or teenage years. Rather, I’ve told myself to embrace in full the unique challenges of each. I’ll have to say the same about the “empty nest.” Except that I don’t really like that term.

“So who all’s living
with you?”
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“I knew
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until you had someone!”

“Open nest” is what we have. The empty rooms are open to others in need of a home. And since our own children are gone, we’ve shared hospitality with international students from Kenya, Turkey, and Korea; other young adults in transition to new jobs or schools; mission-related guests; and friends.

The last time Matthew spent a week at home, I had to rearrange things so he could have his old room back. We’d been hosting a young Korean couple. “So who all’s living with you?” he asked as

he unpacked his bags. “I knew it wouldn’t be long until you had someone!” and then he was out shooting baskets with San Guen Lee.

We love our “open nest.” There is more free time than in the child-rearing days. We still have space for family, but we’re also enjoying the new “family.” We’re gaining a whole new appreciation of art from an art student who boards with us. And we’ve learned how to make “kim chee” (Korean pickled cabbage) and how to transform Swiss chard from our garden into tasty Kenyan “sukuma wiki.”

And for the family far away, we’re also reviving the almost lost art of letter writing. Our family circle letter wends its way around every couple months. In between are the phone calls and occasional visits in their homes.

“Now I understand Rhoda better,” our son-in-law Keith Miller commented to me after a recent visit. “She acts a lot like you. I thought she sounded mad at me even though she said she wasn’t. But now I realize you have that same emphatic way of speaking! I just never noticed it before.”

Redefined old relationships, new relationships, new freedoms, and new revelations. That’s an “open nest.”

Jewel Showalter’s “open nest” is in Landisville, Pennsylvania. She and her husband are both involved in the ministries of Eastern Mennonite Missions. Richard is president and Jewel is a writer and editor.

Hannah is an Angel

by Vicki Markley-Sairs

*H*annah is an angel this year, standing quietly in her white smock and paper wings, tiny golden stars woven into a halo round her head. She shines like a star herself, a delicate child from an English storybook whose smile seems to say, "Here I am, an angel in the Christmas play! Can you believe it? Are you having as much fun as I am? Isn't this great!"

All around her the chaos of dress rehearsal swirls: women digging through a jumble of costumes ("This can't be the shepherd's costume!"), husbands rigging up stage lights (thinking "How did I get roped into this?"), the director and her assistant conferring ("This is taking too long; when can we start; these kids are going to be a mess by the time we get started!"). In the middle of it all stands Hannah, and her smile has never stopped. I look at her in wonder and praise her Maker for giving us such a child.

This is our little church's first all-out, full-scale, bang-up Christmas play, and at dress rehearsal Pauline and I (the above-mentioned director and assistant) aren't sure it's going to fly.

All of the material elements of the play are ready. Props and scenery require effort and some talent, but they're easy to control. You paint them or make them or locate and borrow them, and all that's left is transportation and arrangement. Once you place the manger in the stable, it doesn't wander away or forget its lines or freeze with stage fright. But people, especially children, are not so easily handled.

We gather the children for prayer, and rehearsal officially begins. I'm in charge of the angels, which means I have to get six little girls from one side of the church to the other, ushering them along a narrow path that leads behind the audience, up the side of the sanctuary, and into place behind the Bethlehem-Hills-at-Night backdrop, so they're ready to burst out and scare the shepherds to their knees at just the right moment. Well. This wouldn't be so hard if all my angels were fully in touch, so to speak, but mine seem to be particularly other-worldly bound. So I find myself in a constant game of Find-the-Angel, Direct-the-Angel, and Coach-the-Angel, until they are all, more or less, hidden behind the backdrop (a few wings are showing), waiting for their cue.

It takes a while for the shepherds to remember their moves. These boys feel that simply falling to the ground in awe is somehow an inadequate response, so they ad-lib a little. After we're done picking up cardboard sheep, rearranging headpieces that have been knocked askew, and checking for blood, we're ready to bring on the angels for real.

Their cue is the second line of "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," which of course they miss, several times. Actually, the head angel, Junell, is too conscientious to miss her cue, but her backup support is weak. Again and again Junell appears right on time, plunking her little angel-foot down on the rock that's to be her platform, hoisting her angel-body up straight, and stretching her angel-arms high in benediction, sending all those shepherd boys scattering. Again and again her ethereal retinue stumbles out late, giggles and trips over gowns, then stands befuddled at the sight of collapsed shepherds and bright stage lights. They are supposed to raise their hands up and say "Hallelujah!" one after the other (doing a celestial "wave" of sorts), but they forget until their turn is past, then do it with one quick jerk and look at each other quizzically ("Did I get that right? Did you?"). When it comes to the next part—joining hands and doing a circle dance around Junell-of-the-Rock—my thoughts turn to safety and perhaps even liability.

Pauline and I stare at each other. The play is the day after tomorrow. I look at Hannah, not the least cosmic of the angels. She is still smiling, and she is more than ready.

*O*n the night of the play, the children are beside themselves. Adults and families arrive, cheerful and indulgent, knowing that no matter what happens, they're going to enjoy what they see. There is the occasional nervous mother who remembers what it's like to muff a line, who picks up on the undercurrent of fear in her child that others don't see ("If I do good, Mommy, will they give me a bigger part next year?"). The seats in the audience don't fill up; in such a small church, over half of us are involved up front and backstage.

Pauline and I are in the unfinished addition with the children and costume people. The carpets are covered

*Our children will go out and play their parts,
they will or will not do their best,
they might or might not make big mistakes,
they definitely will not be perfect.*



artwork by Cheryl Benner

*The carpets are covered with protective plastic sheets,
very good for sliding, and for a few minutes
we are treated to The Nativity on Ice.*

with protective plastic sheets, very good for sliding, and for a few minutes we are treated to The Nativity on Ice. The teenagers, known as the Wise Men, lounge against the wall in their silken capes. The oldest, Brian, wears a turbanized hat of startling proportions, without complaining. A true sign of grace, I think to myself, and grace is what we need tonight.

Even as I think this, I know the need has already been met, the answer given long ago, the miracle performed daily. Our children will go out and play their parts, they will or will not do their best, they might or might not make big mistakes, they definitely will not be perfect. And we will watch and guide them, help them with their cues, then sit back and enjoy them, wincing at times, but always forgiving. They are, after all, our children, and they're trying hard to get it right, and we delight in them. Our Father, who gives us the grace, who is the answer, who performs the miracle, will be watching, too.

We gather together and pray, then file out to the sanctuary which is darkened and hushed and holds God's children and others not yet adopted, all waiting to be touched.

Things start well. Most of the lines are remembered, though some are barely audible. Mary and Joseph make it to Bethlehem in time, although Mary gets ahead of herself and goes straight to the manger without stopping at the inn. Not to worry, Joseph tenderly leads her back to the inn, not without a secret smile at the mix-up.

The shepherds tend their sheep without knocking any of them over, and the angels are waiting, semi-quietly, behind the backdrop. I am relieved to see that the Bethlehem-Hills-at-Night are not quaking, which means the angels are not punching each other.

The music starts and I hold my breath. Hark! The herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King. Will they get their cue?

Peace on earth, and mercy mild . . . here they come! God and sinners reconciled! Plunk goes Junell's foot, up go her arms, down go the shepherds and one by one, the angelic host lines up behind her.

Joyful all ye nations rise, . . . And look at that! My angels' arms are rising, too, one after the other, sometimes two sets at a time, but they are rising, and their sweet mouths are sending up "Hallelujah!" in shy little spurts. Join the triumph of the skies . . . and I do, as Hannah shines and all my angels join hands and circle round Junell, only stumbling a little bit, smiling at each other and their feet ("Isn't this fun? Look, we're doing it!").

With the angelic host proclaim "Christ is born in Bethlehem." I look at Hannah in wonder, and praise her Maker for giving us such a child as Jesus. Grace is shining through Hannah, grace is all around me as I sit in that audience, for this is what I know about Hannah: though she smiles like an angel, though her eyes are so full of light that you would think nothing dark has ever touched

her, Hannah has known pain.

And I know more about Hannah, and it is this knowledge that threatens to undo me under the power of all that grace. This is what I know: Hannah, my Christmas angel, the daughter of my friend, is stained by sin. She is for me, tonight, an icon of joy and purity, yet her heart is desperately wicked, and who can know it? It's not just Hannah, you see, but every child onstage and every adult present. Our sin and the evil we do and the good we do not do are more than I can bear to examine; tonight in our small church, we all have such hearts—desperately wicked, unknowable. We are all stained, we are all scarred.

Yet I am overwhelmed by the light, and as the angels exit (Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King") I wonder: Is this how God sees us? God knows our hearts, God knows what we're made of, yet God delights in us as I delight in Hannah and the rowdy shepherds and the other children. We play our parts, we do and do not do our best, we make big and little mistakes, we sin. God watches us, guides us, and gives us our cues. God grieves over our sins and yet he forgives us, because, after all, we are his children, and some of the time, at least, we are trying hard to get it right.

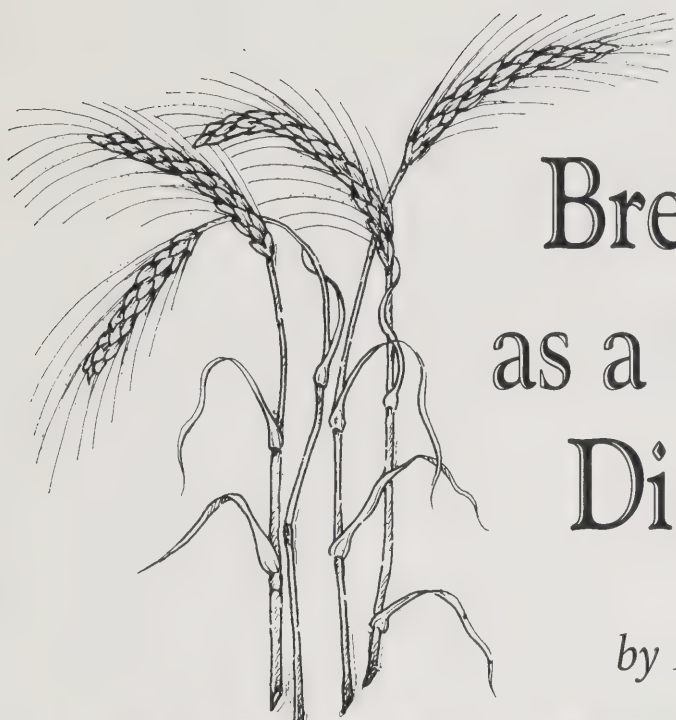
This is the grace, the answer given long ago, the miracle performed in Bethlehem of Judea. Our Maker gave us such a child as this, whose light shines in our hearts, whose light shines in our darkness, whose light shines in the eyes and tireless smile of Hannah, my Christmas angel.

The play draws to a close with only minor mishaps, mostly involving the Wise Men (they are temporarily locked out of the sanctuary—my oversight!), but Brian manages to maneuver his amazing turban through the very low stage doorway without knocking it off, so all ends well. The lights come on, we all stand and sing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus, and then finish with one verse of "Joy to the World."

Jdo not remember the details of what followed. Surely the children ran around and had great fun in their costumes. Parents laughed with other parents about this particular gesture, that particular expression, their particular children. Compliments were given, sighs of relief were heaved, stage lights were turned off, props were picked up and put away. Eventually, everyone went home.

What I do remember is this: the light in Hannah's face, a light that came from deep in God's heart and cast out my darkness, a light so clear, so strong that it revealed my sinfulness and lifted me above it at the same time. It was "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," and I praise my Maker for it.

Vicki Markley-Sairs is a writer living in Mobile, Alabama.



Breadbaking as a Sustaining Discipline

by Phyllis Pellman Good



Sarah Myers (left) and Mary Beth Lind at a signing for their new cookbook at a Borders Book Shop.

photography by FQ/Kenneth Pellman

Yeast can pace a life. When Sarah Myers was in the thick of her three-year occupational therapy degree program, she kept two yeast starters going. That obligation to continually bake bread was self-imposed. "Breadbaking added some order to life," Myers smiles. "One starter needed to be used every 10 days; the other, every week. Their rhythm added a predictability to my life. Those starters needed me. Their lives depended on me."

Myers has explored the far reaches of breadbaking, creating numerous variations on "the three basic ingredients that you need to make bread—flour, water, and a rising agent." In fact, she and her sister, Mary Beth Lind, have adapted and fashioned whole-grain recipes for main dishes and desserts, as well. The two have recently collaborated on a cookbook, *Recipes from the Old Mill; Baking With Whole Grains*.



“There are many ways
to add whole grains to your diet
other than just in breads.
I keep discovering
whole grain noodles,
pizza doughs, quiches,
crepes, soufflés—
and desserts.”

That they should be on the upswing of a dietary trend amuses both of them. When they were growing up on the grounds of a mill in West Virginia, they could foresee neither society's interest in whole grains, nor their own futures as breadbakers. “We grew up on *store-bought* bread!” remembers Lind. “But our mother fostered a general attitude that the kitchen was a place to be creative. Yeast was not something to be afraid of.”

Lind, now a registered dietitian, has married her professional knowledge with her passionate zest for working with flours. “Most flour on the market today is highly processed,” she explains. “Yes, it is enriched. But it is not the full enrichment that was taken out. When you work with *whole* grains, you have the *whole* nutrition in those flours—everything that was originally in those grains.

“Whole wheat flour is now quite available. But often cornmeal that you find in the supermarket is ‘de-germed.’ That means the germ has been removed—and that’s a nutritional and flavor loss.”

Finding whole grain rye and buckwheat flours may require shopping at a specialty or health food store, but with the popularity of bread machines, these flours are increasingly available.

While these sisters are keenly alert to eating nutritionally, one senses quickly that their deep interest in breadbaking is somehow more involved with the very heart of who they are. The practice of working with yeast and flour contributes creative discipline to their often chaotic lives. It supplies them with remarkable sanity

and wholeness. Yet neither one is a crusader. Each speaks about her energy for breadbaking as a kind of ongoing discovery.

“It was after we were both married that we started baking bread,” Lind recalls.

Myers remembers that she was more comfortable beginning with dinner rolls. “I made them for company. It was a good time to try a big recipe! I learned from Mom to experiment and not be afraid.

“I remember persons’ reactions to my serving homemade bread. They were amazed. But it’s not that time-consuming. You can work it in; you can schedule yourself. You and the bread work together mutually.”

Lind works as a consultant dietitian for Headstart programs and retirement communities. She and her husband Lester direct a small retreat center near The Old Mill in Harman, West Virginia, where she and her siblings spent their childhoods. Yet she manages her schedule, she explains, “so I can do my own baking. Even when I have gobs of stuff to do, the breadbaking always gets done first. It’s what I love. We try to follow a lifestyle that allows us to garden and raise most of our own food. Being richly connected in that way is part of my sustenance.”

Baking bread is almost pure pleasure for Myers. “It is simply fun. It is an opportunity to use a lot of creativity—what you put into the bread; how you shape it. I almost never do mass baking. I’m more prone to make bread five times a week. I seldom have the radio on then. It’s quiet. It’s a good time to pray.”

Their new cookbook is testament to the variety of breads it is possible to make. Among the hundreds offered in *Recipes from the Old Mill* are instructions for "Tomato Cheese Wheat Wheels," "Citrus Rye Bread," and "Pumpkin Cornbread." Myers has made many one-of-a-kind loaves. "When I have leftovers in the frig, and I've already served leftovers like them to the family so that I really need to disguise what remains, I run them through the blender. This becomes my liquid for a bread. I just add the other ingredients to make a workable dough! I've used vegetables, spaghetti sauce. Of course, the next question is, 'Can you do this one again?' And often I say, 'No. Enjoy it while you can!'"

That attitude of experimentation has drawn the two sisters to use whole grains for more than just breads.

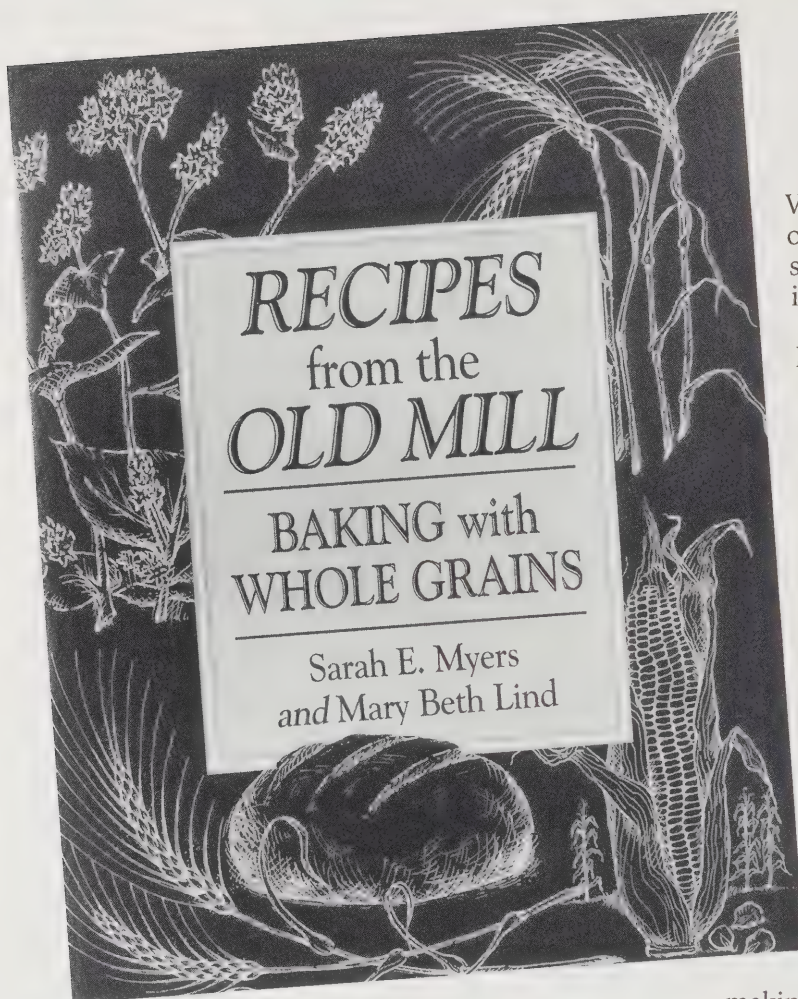
Myers points to the year her family gave up meat for Lent as a turning point. "For those 40 days I had to plan meals that didn't center on meat. I discovered a lot of options that we all enjoyed. And we never went back to eating meat in the same quantity after that.

"There are many ways to add whole grains to your diet other than just in breads. I keep discovering whole grain noodles, pizza doughs, quiches, crepes, soufflés—and desserts.

"I am always disappointed when I order pie in a restaurant, and this piece of pie arrives with a white crust. Something is missing! You can vary the amount of whole wheat flour you put in a crust to match the point at which you are in the whole process of using whole grains."



Myers and Lind serve bread and visit with shoppers at the autographing-tasting party at Borders.



Myers and Lind learned breadbaking on their own. They have this advice for those who would like to begin: "If you can find a breadbaker, ask to spend a morning with her or him. Or bake with a group, with someone who knows how bread should feel. You'll remember what you witnessed.

"If you can't find an experienced breadbaker, look for someone who is as eager as you are and work at it together. It isn't hard—and there will be failures.

"For the first few times that you bake, use a thermometer to measure your water temperature. The water temperature must be right to make the yeast work. The yeast is the crucial element. You can make all kinds of other mistakes and not blow the bread.

"Be sure to have good yeast. Dissolve it in water with a little bit of sugar. If it bubbles in 10 or 15 minutes, you have good yeast."

The Old Mill, still doing its work in a hollow in West

Virginia, has not only survived the mechanization of many traditional industries, it continues to supply Lind and Myers with both flours and inspiration.

Myers reflects, "I suspect Dad saw the mill as kind of a headache when he and Mom bought the property in West Virginia. We moved there in 1954, after Dad started a medical practice in the nearby town of Harman.

"When they first bought the place, the mill was operating—stone-grinding and wood-planing," Lind remembers. "The farmers depended on it for their livestock feed, and for producing cornmeal."

"It was Mom's dream to make the mill something for the community," Myers explains. "She saw the older women's crafts and wanted to provide a market for them. Then she began offering lessons in weaving, carving, basket-making—inviting state craftspersons to come and teach the younger persons.

"In 1965, the summer I got married, Mom suggested I stay home and run the mill. Since then, we each have taken turns managing the place. Each of us has done something slightly different with it. Right now our younger brother's wife is running it. And she is making the mill a place of discovery for children."

These sisters have a rich legacy. Each has translated it into her current life. Together they have gathered much of what they have learned into a cookbook for beginner and veteran alike. What they convey in *Recipes from the Old Mill* are methods and procedure—but also a spirit that they have found in breadbaking.

"For us, it has been a gradual process," remarks Lind. "So when you begin making bread, don't expect it to change your life overnight."

Don't be tight and too serious about it all, they caution. "Approach breadmaking as an adventure," smiles Myers.

Clearly, these two have found working with whole grains to be a remarkable discipline for sanity, a kind of partnership for living faithfully.

See the review of *Recipes from The Old Mill* on page 29, and *How-to-Order* on page 31.



Etching by Naomi Limont

A Hazardous Harmony

by Keith Helmuth

Some years ago a friend paid a visit to our farm and made a remark I have often since pondered. She was a person with enthusiasm for gardening and for all the other activities of a provisioning homestead. However, she was also highly allergic to bee stings and had to be vigilant on that account.

During her visit we went to a neighboring farm to pick strawberries. We spent a sunny morning at the harvest and gathered a good supply of ripe, luscious fruit. She studiously monitored and avoided the bees which were also

out for their morning's work. Driving home in our small car, she was in the front seat when a passing bee was suddenly sucked into the vehicle. After a quick zigzag flight around the interior of the car, it came forward to the windshield, just inches away from our now thoroughly alarmed guest. Without thinking I swung an open hand hard against the glass and killed the bee. The force of the blow also broke the windshield. A big spider web of cracked glass radiated from the flattened insect.

I was astonished. I didn't know

windshields broke so easily. She was mortified that major damage had been done to the vehicle on her account. I said, "Forget it; a windshield is just a windshield. If you had been stung you would have ended up in the hospital, assuming I could have gotten you there in time." She said, "I know; it makes me feel like I'm not fit to be in this world."

Coming from a person who loved the woods and fields and flowers, who was ebullient about the beauty of the earth and had a rever-

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ence for all life, this lament was especially poignant. There have been many times in the years since when events in my own life or in the lives of others have recalled this remark. It neatly focuses an inexplicable characteristic of human consciousness—a longing for perfect adaptation in living. We look at other animals and see them proceeding in a state of untroubled absorption, a kind of centered wholeness in the moment. They are no less subject to environmental hazards, but, as Walt Whitman says, “They do not sweat or whine about their condition/ They do not lie awake in the dark/ Not one is dissatisfied/ over the whole earth.”

It seems to be in the nature of human imagination to conceive a state of wholeness that is routinely beyond our experience, to long for a fitness and unity in living that the hazards of earth process and the difficulties of human relations hold ever at bay. I know it is true that experiences of ineffable unity with creation and peaks of social communion do occur, but this only makes the problem worse—makes the longing all the more tangible.

Why, we wonder, can we not take up permanent residence in that wholeness and unity? Why, as Albert Camus asks, does the heart long to unify the world but the world forever refuses to be unified? Why, for example, do some folks who love the wild ecologies and, especially, honor the pollinating insects have to live in mortal danger of being stung by one of them?

This is not a question that can be answered by introducing a theological concept or invoking some condition of resolution. This is a matter of immediate physiology and adaptation, a matter of being an effective working person in a world that can randomly injure and kill us.

I suppose one could argue that all this is evidence that we really are not of this world, that we are like birds perched in a tree, destined to fly off into some other dimension of existence. This may be an abstractly satisfying way of explaining our troubled adaptation to the earth environment, but it does not touch us where we live, does not answer the real love we feel for the places where we are rooted or our affinity for the beauty of landscapes and waters over which we travel.

After years of dealing with the vagaries of farming, watching the wild ecologies, and trying to modify the insistent demands of the rational mind, I have a sense that creation—and our part in it—is not a closed pattern. It seems to have a ragged edge; perhaps many ragged edges—areas of activity which cannot be brought into completeness or unified because they are not, even within themselves, complete or unified. It is like another turn of the kaleidoscope. What we see and have to deal with is always emerging, always expressive of earth’s fecundity, always tumbling into and out of existence. From soil and water bathed in sunlight energy, from the moving drama of cellular growth and decay, the incredible florescence of created life proceeds.

If our intuition of unity can be

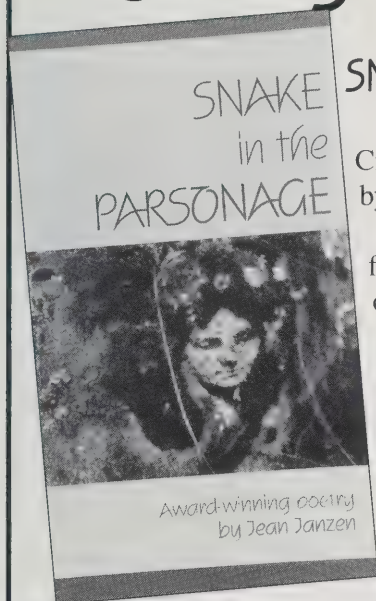
refocused from working on the dichotomy of individual and environment to a recognition of the common earth process which reaches from the cellular level through the human community to the whole earth environment, a sense of harmony may emerge which meets our longing, at least in part.

I sometimes wonder if the quest for wholeness and unity, which leaves us perpetually dissatisfied, is an aberration of our utopian-minded culture. Have we been conditioned by theology and technology to feel, in the end, we can have everything right? A lot of damage has been done and is still being done in the service of this longing.

I have my doubts about wholeness as a reasonable aspiration in a world that works the way this one does. I have struggled too long with wind and weather and with plants and animals to think in terms of unity with creation. But harmony—now that is a quite different matter! There is a ragged harmony, an outrageous harmony, a hazardous harmony in which we are all embedded whether we know it or not. From an individual point-of-view it is perhaps a sad harmony because it comports our brilliant egos into dust. But for the community—the community of cells forming an organism, the community of persons forming a society, the community of the land forming an ecology—in all this, it is the harmony we have and the one we need to learn.

Keith and Ellen Helmuth have developed a small-scale diversified farm in New Brunswick, Canada. Keith writes out of a “a background of ecological and social concern.”

Quality Poetry, Fiction, and Drama



SNAKE IN THE PARSONAGE, Award-winning poetry by Jean Janzen

Snake in the Parsonage includes the poems for which Jean Janzen received The Creative Writing Fellowship in Poetry from the National Endowment for the Arts. Selected by a panel of major poets.

Once again Jean Janzen shows us life—colored deeply and in irrepressible light. She finds both ecstasy and incompleteness—while waiting, at the piano and in the halls of the old people's home, lying in the field, shrieking in the cellar, standing at the blackboard.

Memory comes back in sensual imagery, caught between being earthbound and nearly ethereal. Yet it is always physical, round, giving up color and deep primal tones.

"This book is an event of generosity and grace. With lovely, precise images, Jean Janzen gently restores flesh to spirit and renders sensual pleasures so lush that even in the face of death, 'you have to eat.'"

—Julia Kasdorf, poet

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THREE MENNONITE POETS

Three Mennonite Poets, by Jean Janzen, Yorifumi Yaguchi & David Waltner-Toews

This well-received collection features three poets who differ widely in culture and style, yet are rooted in common values. Yorifumi Yaguchi is a well-known Japanese poet and professor. Jean Janzen is a Fresno, California, poet whose work has appeared in many literary magazines, and David Waltner-Toews is a Canadian with several books to his credit.

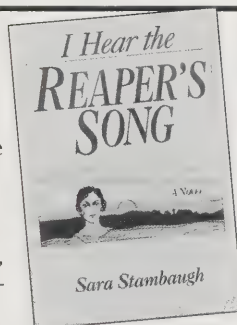
"An unlikely gathering of excellent poems."

—Hiram Poetry Review

"Nature and current events are simultaneously addressed in these lines, most of which reckon in quietly sad ways with the virtues of quietness and peace, the simple life, and humans who seek both."

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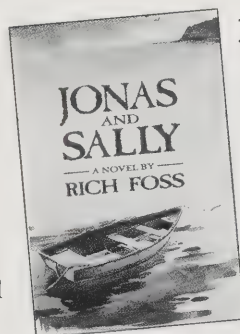
I Hear the Reaper's Song, by Sara Stambaugh

This critically acclaimed first novel portrays tragedy and crisis in a small Pennsylvania community in 1896. Sara Stambaugh captures the point of view, language, and feelings of a 15-year-old Mennonite boy in the whirlpool of his first encounter with death. Depicts a turning point in individual lives and in the life of a community.

"Beautifully written. A fine performance by a writer of considerable ability and accomplishment."

—Washington Post

5½ x 8½ • 221 pages • \$8.95, paperback • \$12.95, hardcover



Jonas and Sally, by Rich Foss

"The fishing tug plowed through the Lake Michigan night, carrying Jonas and Sally to the mainland and her father to jail."

Surprised to be called to this island, surprised to be loving such a woman, Jonas brings his youthful mix of complete certainty and utter ambiguity to his unsettling task.

Abuse, with its long and tensile-strong reach is ruining Sally and Samantha—and the people who love them. Can redemption come? Can love prevail? Is forgiveness

thinkable?

"Rich Foss's new novel is disarming, full of richness and depth. It is a timely and valuable story with its themes of sexual brokenness and healing from abuse."

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Going Places, a play by Merle Good

Going Places is a serious three-act drama which presents three snapshots into the life of the Zimmerman family; each snapshot takes place on a given day; each of the three days are separated by 10 years. Of general interest to all who've experienced the changes from 1969 to 1979 to 1989. Entertaining and thoughtful.

"What makes this play especially interesting is the artful way Good uses solid Mennonite traditions to throw this family's problems into sharper relief

and to indicate how much we have become lost in our rootless culture."

—Booklist

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A Gripping Adventure!

Lost River Conspiracy, by Dave Jackson

A gripping historical adventure, set in the West in the middle of a conflict with the Modoc Indians.

Shell-shocked and grieving, Abe Miller settled into the train to Kansas. His assignment? To find land for building farmsteads for Mennonites on the prairies. But an unlikely couple riding ahead of him detoured his plans—and his future.

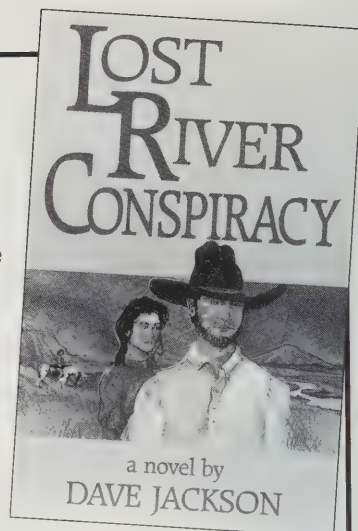
Captured by the young woman's beauty and strength—and incensed by her father's calloused intentions—Abe inserts himself into a long and broiling conflict that takes him to the Lava Beds for a showdown with the Modoc Indians.

A spiraling tornado destroyed Miller's family in Indiana. Now a devious and powerful landowner threatens to dismantle Miller's commitment to peaceful solutions.

Fueled more by idealism than wisdom, Abe Miller takes on Washington, a winter crossing of the desert, and the wooing of his greatest enemy's daughter. Set in the 1870s, this inspirational novel is based on an historical incident, the Modoc Indian War. *Lost River Conspiracy* is adventure and romance, full of wishes in its ending.

Dave Jackson has authored several dozen books. A juvenile fiction series by Jackson based on historical events has already sold more than 300,000 copies! This is the first in his new series for adults and teens.

5½ x 8½ • 220 pages • \$8.95, paperback



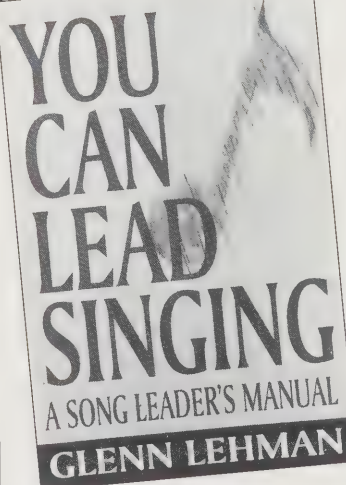
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Hymnals Need Leaders!

You Can Lead Singing

by Glenn Lehman

This easy-to-use book helps beginners to learn to lead singings and shares the wisdom of experienced song leaders.

Few contemporary sources exist for persons who would like to learn to lead singing. This book is especially designed to help leaders in congregational settings, but it can be adapted to any group singing setting. Useful for self-teaching, group teaching, or classroom teaching.

Chapters include "Getting the Pitch," "Rhythm," "Singing Beats," and "Setting Tempo." Each chapter outlines a series of exercises for practicing that chapter's content. Includes numerous illustrations.

Also includes wisdom and pointers from well-known and experienced song leaders such as Kenneth Nafziger, Philip Clemens, and Wilbur Miller.

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• Under director **Leonard Enns**, the winter 1995 Conrad Grebel College Chapel Choir has produced a recording of 20 sacred pieces. *When in Our Music God Is Glorified* is available in compact disc and cassette tape formats. The recording includes music from "high church" to contemporary styles and from African-American works to traditional gospel songs. The 1995 choir consisted of 33 Conrad Grebel students from a wide variety of disciplines. To purchase the recording, call Conrad Grebel College at (519) 885-0220, ext. 226.



• **Leonard Enns** also recently won first prize in a composition competition jointly sponsored by Frank E. Warren Music Service, a Boston music publisher, and His Majestie's Clerkes, a professional Chicago chamber choir. Enns won for his choral work, *Glorious Lord of Life*, written in 1991 for the Winnipeg Singers. The first place award includes \$300 in cash, publication of the work by Frank Warren, and performance of the piece by the chamber choir in its 1996-97 season.

• The **Joseph Schneider Haus**, Kitchener, Ontario, recently opened an exhibition—"Maybe in the Spring"—of a new collection of folk art by Russian Mennonites and Doukhobors from the Canadian prairies. The 22-item collection was purchased by the Museum from a private collector. Most of the Mennonite objects, including "a rare neoclassical Mennonite chair" and "a Mennonite *Schrank*," were gathered from southern Manitoba families. According to curator Susan Burke, the Schneider Haus has one of the best Germanic folk art collections in Canada.

• Interest in **Esther Augsburg**'s Washington D.C. "Guns into Plowshares" sculpture continues to grow. (See Spring/Summer 1994 *FQ*.) A recent issue of *Christianity Today* reports, "Augsburger has hopes for the sculpture far beyond its use as a statue the city will enjoy. She is seeking volunteers to take a model of the statue

into every D.C. high school . . . She also hopes to have a booth nearby where people can read about loved ones from police records of area deaths and leave notes if they wish." The magazine also reports that the sculpture (begun in the summer of 1994) has presented a technical challenge to this innovative Mennonite woman artist. "Previously, Augsburg had worked only with steel, but because guns are made with a variety of alloys, each requires a different welding technique." The proposed site for "Guns into Plowshares" is near the Washington D.C. courthouse, which is close to both the main police headquarters and the home of Mayor Marion Barry.

• Faith & Life Press announces the release of the second recording in the Hymnal Masterworks series—*Classical Guitar* by **Tom Harder**. Selections cover a diversity of hymn styles and include pieces such as, "I Sought the Lord," "Veni Sancte Spiritus," and "Praise God from Whom." The Hymnal Masterworks collection is a series of instrumental recordings selected from and inspired by *Hymnal: A Worship Book*.

• Each year the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Peace and Justice Ministries sponsors the C. Henry Smith Oratorical Contest for students at Mennonite colleges. The 1995 winners were 1) **Eli Dorman**, Bluffton (OH) College for "A Peaceable

Response to People with AIDS"; 2) **Jeremy Kliever**, Bethany (SK) Bible Institute for "Virtual Violence"; and 3) **Rachel Lewis**, Goshen (IN) College for "A Non-Pacifist's View of Pacifism." Cash prizes were awarded. The contest was begun in 1974 to encourage thought on issues of peace and justice.

• The Philadelphia Orchestra has selected **John Eitzen** to serve as a member of the cello section. He began as a full-time member on April 17, 1995. A 1988 graduate of Indiana University, Eitzen has served as a cellist for the Greensboro Symphony Orchestra (1991-95), the Columbus Symphony Orchestra (1987-91), the Indiana University Symphony Orchestra (1985-86), and the Owensboro (KY) Symphony Orchestra (1985-86). Also an active chamber musician, Eitzen is the son of **Allan** and **Ruth Eitzen**, Barto, Pennsylvania.

On Pledging Allegiance

by David Augsburger

"Tomorrow morning everyone will stand, face the flag, place their hands over their hearts, and pledge allegiance," my older brother Myron told me. "I have never done that; you'll not do it either. We Mennonites don't go to war, and we don't salute the flag."

I was six years old, eager for the first day of first grade at the public school. I was also about to experience a contrast between two worlds which I was too little to understand. But I stubbornly (and with embarrassment) stood, holding my hands at my side, the next morning and every morning after that.

A few years ago, I began telling this story to my daughters. After the second sentence, they broke into laughter. "We know, we know," they said in unison.

"Oh, did I tell you this story before?"

"No, but you did the same thing to each of us the day before we started school."

I am totally astounded at myself for having forgotten something like this and for having held so faithfully to

this tradition. But that's how traditions work. We fulfill them because they are there, obey them because it is their time. Often without a second thought or a clear memory because "that's what one does."

Tradition gives us a running start on reality. One cannot leap from a standing position. One need not begin from scratch on every decision. Tradition offers us wisdom we can accept and adapt before we are wise enough to create or invent.

My family offered me a counter-culture tradition before I knew its significance, and I offered the same thing to my children. The flag, that symbol of nationalism, patriotism, and provincialism, is also the mark of militarism and marching off to war. Its sacredness—that is the right word—is evidenced by its place of honor, its entitlement to be kept pure, unsullied, inviolate. It possesses an undeniable claim for the respect of all its subjects—with hand over heart.

The flag is not just the touchstone for admission to the political right, it is still the litmus test of true Americanism for both parties. So

what is its social function? Why is it so emotionally powerful?

Is the veneration of "Old Glory" the central sacrament of the civil religion? The moment of communion in national union? Is it the oath of fealty, the pledge to obey whatever may be asked by the government? Is it the reenactment of induction into the armies who have shaped history and defined its winners and losers? Is it symbolic of our ultimate commitment to our own safety, security, and survival no matter what the cost?

Whatever its meaning, the pledge is too small. A brief reflection on the needs of the approaching third millennium could broaden our vision. The pledges we need to be making are not to the primacy of the haves over the have-nots, not to the support of each nation arming itself against its neighbor.

What if, instead, we dared welcome the occasional substitution of larger pledges that include everyone in the room, even pacifists. For example:

"I pledge allegiance to the world,
The rainbow of peoples God planned
And to the planet on which we stand,
One humanity, under God, with peace
and justice for all."

Or we might consider saying:
"I pledge allegiance to the soil,
To the land that nurtures us
And to the eco-system in which it
stands,
One unity, under God, with life and
health for all."

An alternative pledge might lift our eyes for a second or two to see the earth and all its peoples as a common family sprung from the same Creator. We do need pledges that commit us to live civilly with each other. We need something that moves us beyond, "I pledge allegiance to myself, to who I am and to what I shall become . . ."



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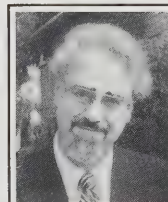
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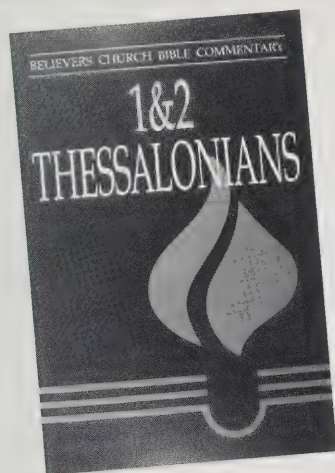
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David Augsburger is
professor of pastoral care
and counseling at Fuller
Theological Seminary,
Pasadena, CA.



- Herald Press has released the seventh volume in the Believers Church Bible Commentary Series—*1 & 2 Thessalonians*. Written by Jacob W. Elias, this volume invites readers to listen in while Paul and his companions encourage and warn believers in ancient Thessalonica.

• *The Clashing Worlds of Economics and Faith* by James Halteman explores how believers (with their interests in the values of the kingdom of God) can interact with our secular economic system, given its very different interests and goals. The book is dedicated to Halteman's parents, "who never preached stewardship; they just practiced it." Revised and expanded edition published by Herald Press. First published in 1988 under the title, *Market Capitalism and Christianity*.

• Masthof Press, a small press near Morgantown, Pennsylvania, with a strong interest in history and genealogy, has published an English translation of *Amish Mennonites in Germany: Their Congregations, The Estates Where They Lived, Their Families* by Hermann Guth. First published in German, it was translated into English by Neil Ann Stuckey Levine and Anne Augspurger Schmidt-Lange. Includes a photo essay showing family homes and estates in Germany and an index of personal names and place names.

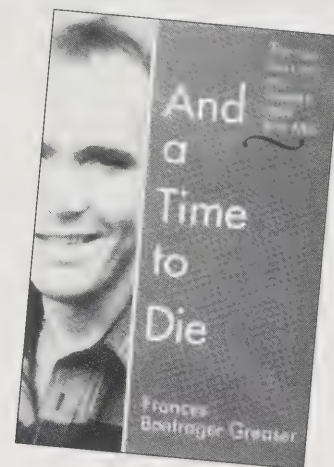
• The curators of "Visual Arts Wichita '95" put together a catalogue of the exhibition. Funding for the

catalogue, was provided by the Schowalter Foundation.

Featuring an introduction by Reinhild Kauenhoven Janzen, the piece provides a record of the works of art shown "on the occasion of the joint conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church." Each piece of art is identified with the title, name of the artist, medium, and size. Each artist also included a statement about the creation of his or her work.

- A new worship resource, *Words for Worship* by Arlene M. Mark, offers a broad selection of liturgical readings and prayers. Includes the churchwide themes of adoration, atonement, and assurance, as well as Anabaptist-Mennonite emphases such as community, peace and justice, and service and obedience. For anyone interested in corporate or family worship. Published by Herald Press.

- The Peace and Justice Committee of the Mennonite Church will begin publication of a quarterly peace and justice newsletter. Designed to give

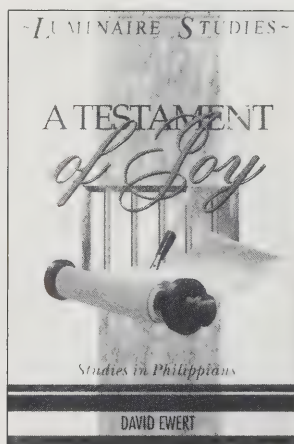


- *And a Time to Die* by Frances Bontrager Greaser is the story of one family's loss of their son. David L. Greaser died of AIDS on October 10, 1991. Told from his parents' point-of-view, the book captures the anguish caused by this ravishing disease, which finally yields to hope and faith. Published by Herald Press.

information about the issues to congregations, families, and individuals, it will be available from the Mennonite Church General Board. Call 219-294-7131 to be added to the mailing list.

- A new Spanish language manual outlines the creative peacemaking approaches used by two Mennonite Central Committee workers who have spent many years working with people in conflict. **Conflicto y violencia? Busquemos alternativas creativas!** (*Conflict and Violence? Let's Look for Creative Alternatives!*) was written in Spanish by John Paul Lederach and Mark Chupp. It is published by SEMILLA, Guatemala City, Guatemala.

- The fourth volume in the Miriam's Journal series—*A Treasured Friendship* by Carrie Bender—is scheduled for release in January of 1996. Light Christian fiction from Herald Press.



- *A Testament of Joy* by David Ewert is a lay person's commentary on the book of Philippians. It is divided into 13 chapters and recommended as a Sunday school quarter study. Based on the Greek text, but written in non-technical language, it uses the *New Revised Standard Version* of the Bible. It is published by Kindred Productions of Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Hillsboro, Kansas, and is the fifth book in the Luminaire Series.

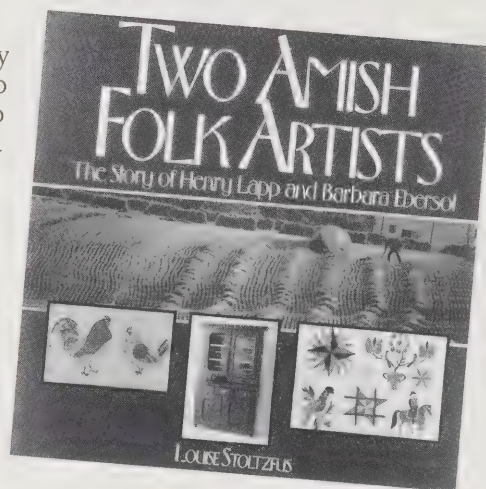
Two Amish Folk Artists, Louise Stoltzfus. Good Books, 1995. 119 pages, \$19.95, paperback.

Reviewed by Wendell R. Zercher

The mention of the name Henry Lapp or Barbara Ebersol is enough to quicken the pulse of anyone who knows anything about Pennsylvania folk art—be they collector, historian, or art lover. The colorful watercolors and charming furniture of Henry Lapp come to mind. Or the hand-decorated and -painted fraktur bookplates of Barbara Ebersol. But what is startling is not only that both grew up in the Amish community of 19th century Lancaster County, but that each also had physical handicaps. Henry had a serious hearing impairment and Barbara was a dwarf. Neither married, but instead found their identities in unusually distinctive craftsmanship and artistic expression.

The author opens this book by asserting: "Many of us are increasingly intrigued by Amish life." This statement is evidenced by the constantly growing numbers of tourists from home and abroad who come to Lancaster County to see and learn about these unique people who don't seem to fit our 20th century world. For those from afar who are just curious, as well as for those who share the same Pennsylvania landscape, this book opens a window on the Amish. In her attempt to explain how this religious community (which seemingly prizes "cookie cutter" sameness) could have produced and even nurtured two individuals who did not fit the pattern, the author reveals much about life among the Old Order Amish.

Formerly Amish herself, Louise Stoltzfus relies on interviews, conversations, old letters, courthouse records, and other published sources to tell her story. Inescapably writing as an insider, she unearths the memories and lore related by relatives and acquaintances. Out of deference to the Amish community and respect for their desire for privacy, the examination of her subject is invariably guarded and sensitive. Searching diligently for answers to explain the lives of these two folk artists, she is, nevertheless, not exhaustively analytical or



invasive in a way that one might expect from a strictly secular writer.

That this book in actuality examines two separate subjects—however much they overlap—it precedes a more definitive work. While it is instructive and even intriguing to learn all that Barbara Ebersol and Henry Lapp have in common, there are times throughout the book when it would be less awkward and easier to grasp if there were only one subject.

The strength of this work is the honest portrayal of the lives of two individual artists, the nature of their community, and how they fit into this and the larger world. Stoltzfus emphasizes content, not just the artistic product. Yet the reader who wants to see what Lapp and Ebersol created will not be disappointed. Excellent color reproductions of paintings, fraktur, furniture, etc. are in abundance. The book will satisfy the uninitiated eye as well as provide insights for those with a more developed taste.

Wendell R. Zercher is curator of the Heritage Center Museum of Lancaster County, Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

FQ Price—\$15.96
(Regular price—\$19.95)

Lost River Conspiracy, Dave Jackson. Good Books, 1995. 220 pages, \$8.95, paperback.

Reviewed by Melodie M. Davis

The "Raiders-of-the-Lost-Ark" look of Dave Jackson's author photo on the back of his new novel, *Lost River Conspiracy*, hints at the nature of this 1870's historical fiction. This book is a leave-you-breathless page turner. Idealistic Abe Miller, the main character, whirls through a tornado, gets bullied on a train to Kansas scouting land for fellow Mennonite farmers, is bloodied in a gun showdown, falls in love, survives being attacked by Indians and dragged by wolves after nearly dying of exposure—all in the first half of the book. Before the book ends, Miller is tested in a bloody Modoc Indian war.

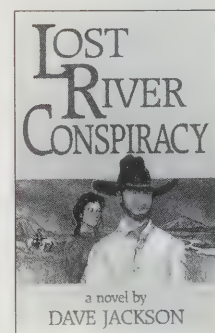
Jackson unobtrusively weaves satisfying themes into this almost non-stop action. For instance, does peacemaking work or are its adherents hopelessly naive? How can I claim to be a pacifist if I'm not sure how I would react in a hostile situation? What is the nature of human evil? The answers are not typical clichés.

This is rousing, thought-provoking entertainment, but it may not be great literature. I doubt great literature is Jackson's goal. "Take it easy, kid, and nobody gets hurt," a robber snarls, sounding more like a TV western than 1870's dialogue. Jackson's work is enhanced by descriptions of the Oregon Modoc country where he has lived. Only the ending left me wondering where the motivation came from for Abe Miller's surprise decision.

In all, I have only admiration for a writer who can, without much preaching, preach peacemaking so entertainingly.

Melodie M. Davis, Harrisonburg, Virginia, writes a newspaper column—Another Way—and has authored eight books.

FQ price—\$7.16
(Regular price—\$8.95)



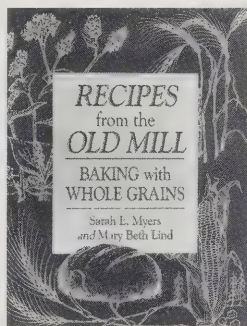
Recipes from the Old Mill, Sarah E. Myers and Mary Beth Lind. Good Books, 1995. 252 pages, \$13.95, paperback.

Reviewed by Willard E. Roth

As one who frequently checks the end of a book before the introduction, I was intrigued by the last entry. "Our husbands predict that this recipe alone will sell the cookbook." With Herb's and Lester's unconditional endorsement, what could I do but give Chewy Granola Bars a try? The verdict, even minus chocolate chips—yummy indeed.

The "old mill" is a water-powered grist mill in the West Virginia mountains where the Bucher sisters grew up. From their childhood love of whole grains has come a cookbook both user-friendly and artfully de-signed.

Recipes in the first part of the book are grouped by the grain—corn, wheat, rye, buckwheat, and multi-grain. This is fol-



lowed by sections for spreads, breakfast and holiday breads, cultural foods, main dishes, and desserts. The 180 recipes range from Yogurt Cornbread (crusty and chewy baked in a skillet as the authors promise!) to High Energy Raisin Cookies (certainly "full of nutrients" but mine, though tasty, were a bit too crumbly to "travel well").

For non-professionals the final pages, outlining the basic ingredients in breadbaking, offer a useful summary of the art. The authors clarify some of the finer points related to gluten and yeast, to fats and eggs. Another plus—scattered throughout the volume are a variety of tips such as ways to shape loaves, testing for doneness, and freezing breads. The book is well indexed.

Willard E. Roth manages the household kitchen. He also edits publications for Mennonite World Conference and serves as a pastor.

FQ price—\$11.16
(Regular price—13.95)

Christmas Ideas for Families, Phyllis Pellman Good and Merle Good. Good Books, 1995. 155 pages, \$9.95, paperback.

Reviewed by Laura Blosser Draper

New candles made from old. A manger scene from a hollow log. Using amaryllis, paper whites, poinsettias, and Christmas cactus.

A Christmas Eve fondue dinner with china, goblets, and candlelight. A Christmas Eve soup supper before church. A chocolate fondue party with friends. Christmas Danish Swirls, Pumpkin Pecan Pie, Oyster Filling, Turnip Relish, Orange Charlotte, Berliner Kranz Cookies, Sugar Plum Loaves.

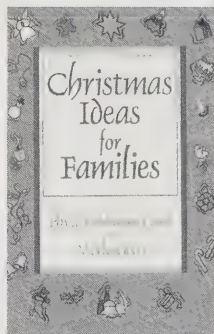
Giving gifts in secret ("each successive night we stealthily deliver") to a neighbor on each of the 12 days before Christmas and singing a customized version of the song in person on Christmas Eve. An Advent calendar with 24 bags of goodies to open. A baby shower for Jesus with gifts donated to a local food and clothes closet. Reading Christmas classics aloud. A service of Lessons and Carols. Supper by candlelight with a story, song, or Bible reading every evening of Advent and Epiphany, with a Jesse Tree for symbols from the stories.

From food, decorating, and meaningful shopping to Advent, music, and gifting traditions, here are ideas new and old, elaborate and simple. Traditions and ideas for Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, even Christmas with extended families, make this book a timeless collection. And lest it sound overwhelming, I note that ideas for simplifying are also found here.

Thank you Phyllis and Merle Good, for this *Festival Quarterly* family Christmas scrapbook. It's a delight!

Laura Blosser Draper is Campus Pastor at Iowa Mennonite School, Kalona, Iowa.

FQ price—\$7.96
(Regular price—9.95)



Meditations for Moms-To-Be, Sandra Drescher-Lehman. Good Books, 1995. 284 pages, \$7.95, paperback.

Reviewed by Gwen Gustafson-Zook

Pregnancy is a unique time in a woman's life. Excitement and fear, exhilaration and sadness, health and discomfort—all accompany a woman throughout the days of gestation.

Sandra Drescher-Lehman has captured a wide range of these emotions and experiences in her new devotional guide for expectant women. She shares candidly from her own experiences as a pregnant woman. Sometimes humorous, sometimes sobering, always thought-provoking. Drescher-Lehman walks with the reader through the ups and downs of this profound time in a woman's life. Nausea, fears, expectations, mood swings, nesting fatigue, joys, extending belly. Drescher-Lehman gently invites the reader to welcome it all as an amazing and sacred time in life.



Each page contains one titled meditation. Titles such as "Creative Fatigue," "Companionship," "Waddling," "Power in Naming," and "Vessel" are followed by a short, down-to-earth meditation. One modest suggestion for action (or inaction in some cases!) follows the meditation, as does an apt Bible verse or portion thereof.

Meditations for Moms-To-Be provides a daily companion through the myriad of thoughts, feelings, and experiences of pregnancy. Like a good friend, Drescher-Lehman walks with the reader, sharing experiences and embracing the questions but not giving too many unsolicited answers.

This book would make a thoughtful gift for a newly expectant Mom-To-Be. It's enjoyable, comforting, and encouraging—all things expectant women savor.

Gwen Gustafson-Zook, Portland, Oregon, is the mother of two preschool children. With her husband, Les, she also co-directs PLOW (Portland Learning, Outreach, and Worship).

FQ price—\$6.36
(Regular price—7.95)

Mennonite Entrepreneurs, Calvin Redekop, Stephen C. Ainlay, Robert Siemens. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995. 291 pages, \$34.95, hardcover.

Reviewed by Leonard Geiser

This is a book about Mennonite entrepreneurs which will likely not be read by many Mennonite entrepreneurs. Rather, it is for the scholar and researcher and will be helpful to those who are studying the relationship of one's faith to one's vocation—in particular, how being a business entrepreneur fits, or doesn't fit, into the framework of Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition and theology.

The book is divided into three parts. Part I discusses Anabaptist-Mennonite culture, theology, and history. Part II reflects the research data collected in 1985-86 by Redekop when he randomly selected and interviewed 100 entrepreneurs from various Mennonite communities. In the final section of the book, the authors attempt to use sociological theory to explain Mennonite faith and economic practice. I think I'll have to read some of the chapters again to be sure I understand the authors' points.

Stories of entrepreneurs illustrate the struggles these persons experienced as they attempted to be part of both the Mennonite church community and the broader business world. Often entrepreneurs appear to the church to be more secular, more materialistic, more individualistic, and more status-oriented than other people. The authors also address the issue of alienation and conclude that, while some business persons do leave the church community, entrepreneurs are at least as well integrated (and some data would suggest better integrated) and no more alienated than most Mennonites. Read the book. See what you think.

Leonard Geiser is Professor of Business and Director of the Family Business Program at Goshen (IN) College.

FQ price—\$27.96
(Regular price—\$34.95)

Essays in Anabaptist Theology, edited by H. Wayne Pipkin. Institute of Mennonite Studies, Elkhart, Indiana, 1994. 271 pages, \$15.95, paperback.

Reviewed by Juan Francisco Martinez

Essays in Anabaptist Theology is the fifth volume in a series whose stated purpose is "to make available significant resource materials for seminary classroom use." It addresses the question: "Is there, or was there, an Anabaptist theology?" The book is a compilation of 12 articles, written by different scholars who analyze theological issues raised by 16th century Anabaptists. It also has an annotated bibliography.

An introductory essay reviews how scholars have explained the unity and diversity in Anabaptist theology. Subsequent chapters address 16th century Anabaptists' understanding of hermeneutics, revelation, the Spirit, baptism, sin, faith, and martyrdom. Most of the articles were originally published in *Mennonite Quarterly Review* and reflect a scholarly level of writing, including extensive quotes and thorough references.

Because of its title, one would have expected the book to also address Anabaptist theology today. And it would have been enriching to include writers from the Two-Thirds World, where Anabaptist theology is developing in ways different than in North America and Europe. Hopefully, these issues will be addressed by a future volume in the series.

Essays is for a limited audience. Those with a limited background in Anabaptist theology will find the book difficult to follow. But for the student and scholar, this is a useful collection of articles on 16th century Anabaptist thought, written by some of the most respected Anabaptist scholars.

Juan Francisco Martinez is Rector of the Latin American Anabaptist Seminary (SAL/SEMILLA) in Guatemala City, Guatemala.

FQ price—\$12.76
(Regular price—\$15.95)

Why We Live in Community, Eberhard Arnold with two interpretive talks by Thomas Merton. Plough Publishing House, 1995. 73 pages, \$5.00, paperback.

Reviewed by Jody Miller Shearer

A naive, challenging, and odd connection between Catholic monk Thomas Merton and Hutterian founder Eberhard Arnold can be found in this slim volume. Plough Publishing House has re-issued Arnold's thoughts about community along with two "interpretive talks" by Merton.

I found Arnold's words almost naive in their sincerity. Where else in today's cynical world would we find the statement "We must live in community because the struggle of life against death demands united ranks of souls and bodies that can be mobilized wherever death threatens life"? Yet, Merton, too, was accused of naivete by some less willing to take seriously the Gospel call of peacemaking.

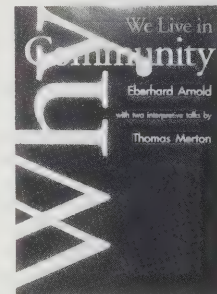
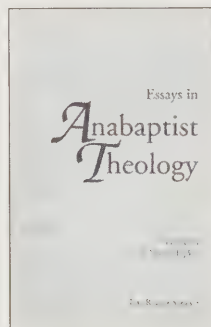
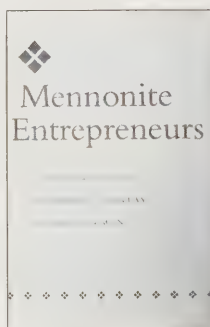
And that is where the challenge sits. Arnold lived out what he wrote. So did Merton. There may be flaws in monasteries and bruderhofs, but lack of integrity is not one of them. Such consistency of word and deed turn accusations of naiveté quickly aside.

But it does not turn aside the oddness of it all. The prospect of common goods, self-surrender, and subordination to the whole remains as odd now as it was 75 years ago when Arnold penned his thoughts. In our individualistic society, community just doesn't fit. Yet, I found myself compelled by Arnold's vision.

Despite the oddness, challenge, and naiveté, or perhaps because of it, this is a book worth reading.

Jody Miller Shearer lives in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where he shares a three-story row-house with his wife and family, as well as other members of their extended family. Sometimes, they realize that they are living in community.

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Two Did Not Go

by Peter J. Dyck

Migration is in the news these days. The sentiment is that too many people are flooding into the United States, taking away jobs, and bringing with them strange habits, languages, cultures, and religions. The mood is to expel the illegal immigrants and to have tighter controls at the borders.

There are two kinds of migrations: voluntary and involuntary. The involuntary people are usually referred to as refugees. They do not want to leave their country but feel compelled to flee. Often their lives are in danger. Amnesty International says that the amount of torture in some countries is incredible.

Obvious as it may seem, in all voluntary migrations there must be push and pull—the push to leave a country and the pull to enter another country. If, for example, conditions are good in both countries A and B—as in Canada and the United States—there is very little movement from one country to the other. By the same token, if conditions are bad in both A and B, there is also very little or no movement. Conditions in country A must be bad, and conditions in country B must be good before there will be migration from A to B.

That is how it was in Russia in 1895. At least, that is how Mennonites in the village of Kotosufka perceived it. These were not Dutch Mennonites. They were Swiss. There wasn't a Dyck, Klassen, or Janzen among them. They were all Stuckys, Krehbiels, and Schraggs. About a hundred of these families had left Switzerland in 1671 and settled in south Germany. In 1773 they left Germany and settled in Russia.

When Alexander I, tsar of Russia, began modernizing his Empire, he also introduced universal military conscription. Mennonites, including the settlers in Kotosufka, interpreted this as "push." The time had come once again to move out. America provided the "pull."

On August 6, 1874, the entire village of Kotosufka left Russia. All but two, that is. In writing the history of these people, their village, and their

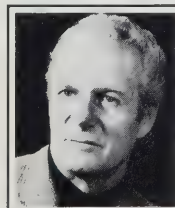
church a hundred years later (1995), Jerome K. Waltner simply says, "With the exception of two men, every member of the congregation joined in the move to the United States."

There is no explanation why these two men did not go along. No information on what happened to them afterwards. They are simply dropped from the record. Something like the incident my great-grandfather recorded when crossing the Atlantic in 1848 and having a seaman swept overboard by a high wave. They tossed a table out to the drowning man; they crossed the spot for a while, lingering and looking. But then they gave up and went on.

For three days in August of 1995, the descendants of Kotosufka gathered to commemorate their 100th anniversary in America. What a celebration! The weekend theme was "To the Glory of God." They plowed the fields with horses and threshed wheat with steam engines. They relived their four centuries (one each in Switzerland, Germany, Russia, and America) in drama and song, displays and food, storytelling and much more.

I was there and so was Elfrieda, my wife. I had been pastor of their church—Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kansas—for seven years in the 1950s. It was very moving, very meaningful. The wisdom of their forbears in leaving Russia, the courage of the pioneers in settling on the Kansas prairie, the determination of successive generations in maintaining the Anabaptist faith, and the joy of those celebrating a hundred years—all to the glory of God.

But nobody mentioned the two who stayed behind. No words, no tears, not even a sigh. And look what they missed!



Peter J. Dyck has spent a rich life shuttling refugees to new homelands, overseeing relief programs, and telling wise and witty stories. He and his wife, Elfrieda, live in Scottsdale, PA.

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How MCC Celebrated Its 75th Birthday

At its annual meeting in mid-February 1995 in Fresno, California, Mennonite Central Committee launched a year of activities centered around its 75th anniversary. The February meeting was an academic symposium which highlighted the 1920 conception of MCC—articulated at a meeting at Prairie Street (IN) Mennonite Church—and the ongoing work of this relief organization which seeks to meet the world's "needs for love, justice, and wholeness in the name of Christ wherever we are called to serve."

An Anniversary Committee, which operated out of the MCC Akron office, encouraged local celebrations and provided resources to those across the broader Mennonite community interested in marking the milestone event.

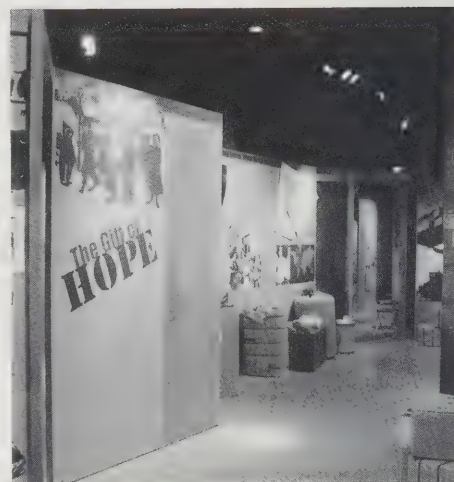
Many folks participated. At least two quiltmakers created 75th anniversary quilts. Fay Kliever, Aurora, Nebraska, donated her watercolor quilt to the MCC board at the Fresno annual meeting. She used the popular watercolor design technique, incorporating fabrics from various Two-Thirds World countries, to depict the MCC symbol rising out of a pair of helping hands. The Kliever quilt traveled to many of the MCC relief sales where it was "auctioned" for donations to

MCC. It will eventually hang in the MCC offices, probably rotating between Winnipeg and Akron.

Ruth Hartman, Harrisonburg, Virginia, began working on her anniversary quilt on Easter Sunday, 1995. While Hartman's quilt features more traditional piecing and appliquing, she also integrated the MCC symbol in her design with a group of embroidered words, including the phrase "In the name of Christ." Her quilt was auctioned at the Virginia relief sale in September and also donated to MCC.

The Kauffman Museum, North Newton, Kansas, installed an exhibition to celebrate the anniversary. Curated by Robert Kreider and designed by Robert Regier, the exhibit opened in time for Wichita '95, the MC/GC biennial assembly. "The Gift of Hope" continues through June 2, 1996, and features the original MCC canner, along with many other artifacts that tell the story of Mennonite Central Committee, 1920-1995.

Sunday, September 24, 1995 was declared MCC Sunday because it was closest to the date of MCC's first official meeting—September 27, 1920 in Chicago. Congregations across the United States and Canada celebrated in various ways. At Prairie Street an



MCC photo by Jim King

A view of the MCC 75th Anniversary exhibit at Kauffman Museum, North Newton, Kansas.

entire weekend was devoted to the celebration. Presenters at the 1995 Prairie Street event included C.J. Dyck, a recipient of aid in Russia who later served with MCC in Europe and South America, and Earl Martin, a storyteller and former MCC worker in Southeast Asia who told stories around the subject, "Plowing Up Swords." In addition, a three-act historical drama, *Our Daily Bread*, written by John Bender, was presented.

On September 27, 1995, exactly 75 years after the first official MCC meeting, a group of Mennonites assembled at the former Chortitza Mennonite Church in the Ukraine for a service commemorating the aid given to the village of Chortitza during this dark chapter in Russian Mennonite history. The former church, which has been a "cultural palace" for decades, reverberated with the sound of more than 150 people—both North American and present-day Ukrainian Mennonites—as they joined in the singing of "The Work Is Thine, Lord Jesus Christ" and "So nimm denn meine Hände." Paul Toews, Fresno, California, gave a meditation on the needs of the Ukraine and the resulting MCC response in 1920. —LS



MCC photo by Emily Will

Fay Kliever displays the watercolor quilt she designed and fashioned in honor of MCC's 75th anniversary.

First-of-Its-Kind Permanent Mennonite Art Collection



Visitors to an opening reception fill one of two mini-galleries operated by The People's Place Gallery at Harvest View, Landis Homes Retirement Community.

Late this past summer, the Landis Homes Retirement Community, Lititz, Pennsylvania, held an Open House celebration for its new wing, Harvest View. During the event they introduced their first-of-its-kind Mennonite-related art collection. Gracing the halls, lobbies, and lounges of Harvest View are more than 30 paintings, photographs, and prints, as well as fiber and ceramic pieces, by some of the finest artists in the Mennonite tradition.

The project was a joint effort of Landis Homes and The People's Place Gallery. The permanent collection includes works by Eva Beidler, Hyattsville, Maryland; Ray Dirks, Winnipeg, Manitoba; David Peter Hunsberger, Waterloo, Ontario; Dennis Maust, Lititz, Pennsylvania; and Erna Martin Yost, Jersey City, New Jersey, as well as many other artists.

The curator of the exhibition, Deborah Laws-Landis, prepared a "Guide to Art Work in Harvest View" which was made available to visitors at the Open House. Copies of the guide are kept in the well-appointed library on the first floor of Harvest View. Visitors and residents are invited to spend time taking a tour of the collection.

Landis Homes also entered into an agreement with The People's Place Gallery, Intercourse, Pennsylvania, for the operation of two mini-galleries on the ground floor of Harvest View. These galleries will offer alternating exhibits by a variety of Mennonite-

related artists. The works will be for sale.

The mini-galleries opened in late August with the exhibition of a collection of weavings by Harry Houser, New Danville, Pennsylvania, and with a showing of the photographs of Ruth Hershey (1895-1990), a Lancaster County Mennonite woman whose remarkable images have been rediscovered by her grandson, Edwin P. Huddle, a professional photographer. Houser and Huddle attended the reception, interacting with more than 150 enthusiastic residents and staff of the Landis Homes Retirement Community.

When asked about the inspiration for the unusual collection, Laws-Landis noted, "We wanted to do something more with our walls and space than just fill it with art which is typically found in retirement communities and which has been chosen to 'blend in' with the decor. We wanted the works to reflect our location in Lancaster County and the kind of residents who live at Harvest View."

The permanent collection is available for viewing year-round. Visitors may contact staff or residents of Harvest View for information on how to take an art tour of the permanent collection. Persons with questions about the artists or the mini-galleries should contact The People's Place Gallery, P.O. Box 419, Intercourse, PA 17534. Telephone number: 717-768-7171. —LS

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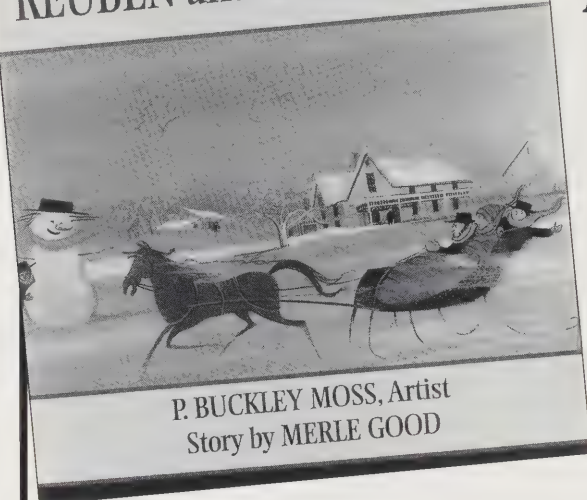
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REUBEN and the BLIZZARD



Reuben and the Blizzard

P. Buckley Moss, Artist; Story by Merle Good

The adventures of Reuben the Amish boy continue! This is a second book in the top-selling series.

When the biggest blizzard in years sweeps across their farm, Reuben and his five sisters, his parents, and his grandfather all face new adventures and challenges. Reuben is worried about the five new pups. The snow blows so hard he can hardly see where he is walking.

But the Amish way has advantages, too. The loss of electricity doesn't affect his family. And when their neighbor man can't get his car out to take his wife to the hospital, Reuben and his father come to the rescue with their sleigh.

The art of internationally-known artist P. Buckley Moss captures the color and character of Amish life with striking elegance. Heartwarming story, dramatically paired with Moss's highly acclaimed and endearing artwork.

For ages 4-8 • 9 x 9 • 32 pages • Four-color artwork • \$14.95, preprinted cover plus dustjacket

Reuben and the Fire

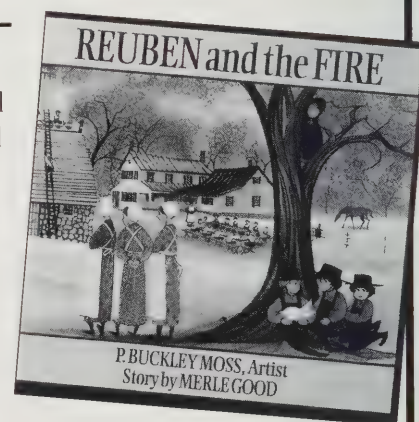
P. Buckley Moss, Artist; Story by Merle Good

Reuben is an Amish boy who has five sisters, wants to drive the buggy, and gives his animals names ending in "shine." One day he and his friends Sam and Ben see his neighbor's barn on fire. Several days later the neighborhood gathers for a barnraising. Reuben and his friends get to attend the community event.

This story takes the reader inside the world of the Amish with adventure, a sense of place, and a touch of humor.

"Good's dialogue is lively and colorful . . . An attractive glimpse of Amish culture at its most traditional." —Kirkus Reviews

"This delightful children's book is a winner!" —Bookends



For ages 4-8 • 9 x 9 • 32 pages • Four-color artwork • \$14.95, preprinted cover plus dustjacket

TEACHER'S GUIDE

(LITERATURE BASED APPROACH)

For use with
the children's book
REUBEN AND THE FIRE



P. BUCKLEY MOSS, ARTIST
STORY BY MERLE GOOD

COMPILED BY LOIS E. LAHMAN

Teacher's Guide

compiled by Lois E. Lahman

For use with the children's book *Reuben and the Fire*,

P. Buckley Moss, Artist; Story by Merle Good

This Literature Based Approach to the very popular children's picture book *Reuben and the Fire* is designed to help teachers and educators. The guide offers lesson plans for using *Reuben and the Fire* with Kindergarten and Grade One students.

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The American President—The President is a liberal/centrist Democrat. He has a 12-year-old daughter. He also is a widower. This excellent film (directed by Rob Reiner) combines the fast pace of the White House with political tugs of war and a President dating a bright, beautiful lobbyist while his opponents criticize. Funny, thoughtful, and entertaining. (8)

The Brothers McMullen—Three Irish Catholic brothers from the suburbs of New York struggle to focus their lives after rough growing-up days. Each of the three harbors mixed agenda about love, life, and faith. Oh—and there's a lot of talking. But worthwhile, nonetheless. (6)

Casino—Why can't Martin Scorsese have a sense of humor? This third quasi-epic about the mob is less engaging than his earlier, grittier films. But it so lacks humor. A look at a bookie, chosen by the mob to run a major casino in Las Vegas. A parable about Vegas is thrown in for free. Lacks personality, so the brutality seems without context. (4)

Copycat—Hold on to your hat! This taut thriller teams an expert on serial killers with an intense, tough police investigator (Holly Hunter is great) as they try to out-

wit a serial killer who's hung up on history. (7)

Get Shorty—Some films are delicious. What would happen, for instance, if a mobster went to Hollywood? Who would outwit whom? Throw in John Travolta and Danny De Vito, and you got a tasty yarn. A delicious, well-written, well-acted, well-directed con job. (7)

GoldenEye—This latest James Bond movie stars Pierce Brosnan, charming but somewhat spineless. The genre mainly depends on gadgets, sight gags, and beautiful women (some of whom want to kill Bond). As such, it delivers its light entertainment. But nothing more. (4)

Home for the Holidays—Family gathering as trauma. Worthwhile bittersweet depiction of a fractured family who gathers for Thanksgiving. Funny, sad, and even somewhat hopeful. (7)

Money Train—Two cops (also foster brothers, one white and one black) confront the problems of the transit system in New York City. Funny, romantic, and suspenseful look at their relationship, but the movie's flaws hamper the effort. (5)

Never Talk to Strangers—A thriller about a criminal psychologist who's being stalked by someone she knows—but whom? Has a contrived tone to the whole picture. So-so. (4)

Nick of Time—An accountant's daughter is kidnapped by terrorists and will be killed at 1:30 p.m. today—unless the accountant assassinates the governor before 1:30 p.m. today. Full of suspenseful moments, but somehow comes off gimmicky. (5)

Strange Days—A highly provocative film which blurs real experience with high-tech voyeurism of other person's experiences, including sex and murder. Set in the not-too-distant future, a peddler of vicarious thrills has his game boomerang. Stylishly manipulative. (6)

Toy Story—The first, full-length, completely computer-generated, animated movie. Ever. If that doesn't impress you, you may still enjoy this story of toys who come to life and are full of compassion, compared to that bad boy next door. Adults may enjoy it as much as kids. (7)

Films are rated from an adult FQ perspective on a scale from 1 through 9, based on their sensitivity, integrity, and technique.



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Drescher-Lehman writes as a friend, from her own life. Her books have sold nearly 300,000 copies.

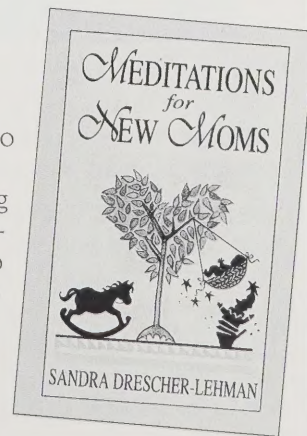
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Great Thoughts

by Katie Funk Wiebe

I had made what I considered a fairly significant presentation at the women's gathering. As I waited at the front, I saw a middle-aged woman deliberately making her way down the aisle toward me, a broad smile on her face. I contemplated the rewarding compliments she would give me. Instead, she said, "I've been admiring your dress. If you made it, where did you get the pattern?" So much for great thoughts.

• • •

In the Mennonite settlements in the Ukraine in the early decades of this century, justice was sometimes swift. One summer the owners of a small orchard noticed that fruit was disappearing from their orchard. A course of action was agreed upon. Three young men agreed to secretly keep watch for several nights to catch the culprits.

One night as the men hid in the brush, they heard voices and then noticed two fellows picking fruit. Silently, the watchers sneaked up on them and let the pickers have it with a broadside of salt from their shotgun. The thieves screamed and ran off. The next day the villagers wondered why two hired men from the other end of the village were sitting in a watering trough trying

to get salt out of their bottoms. Those who knew weren't telling.

— *From Reflections*
by Dave Schellenberg

• • •

Around 1906 a mostly English-speaking minister, A.L.B. Martin, was asked by a rural Church of the Brethren elder to preach a two-week revival service. The assumption was that he spoke German. After he came, objections to his use of English were considerable. One day Martin and the elder were visiting a home. When Martin spoke English to the children, Brother Wengert admonished him not to do that. A dog came up, and Martin spoke to it in English. Brother Wengert said in Pennsylvania Dutch, "He didn't understand a word you said."

— *From Moving Toward the Mainstream*
by Donald R. Fitzkee

• • •

When Mennonite Central Committee first began, one of the early tasks was distributing used clothing donated by Mennonites in the United States, particularly the eastern regions, to refugees in Turkey. Joe Brunk, an early MCC worker, had a hard time giving away men's plain suits, especially if the coats had belonged to preachers and the trousers were broadfalls. Mennonite refugees from Russia had never heard of such costumes, and they did not want to give up one uniform to take another.

The Kalmucks, an ethnic group from South Russia with Chinese facial features, dressed much like Old Order Amish, according to Brunk. So they accepted donated Mennonite women's dresses willingly. What about the capes? The men cut them down a little and wore them around the neck as a light summer muffler.

— *From Dear Alice:*
The Tribulations and Adventures of J.E. Brunk




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Katie Funk Wiebe, author of many books and articles, is a freelance writer living in Wichita, Kansas.

A Marriage of Heart and Mind *by Noel Perrin*

Anne's study is downstairs, mine is upstairs. Hers contains a large word processor, a laptop, a printer, and a fairly rapid copy machine. Mine contains an electric typewriter (for which I will soon have trouble getting ribbons).

That's up at her house. At my house, 46 miles to the south, her study is an elegant little room built inside one corner of the barn; mine is still upstairs. Hers contains no machinery at all; except when she was in residence, and then it had the laptop she brought with her. Mine has an electric typewriter identical to the one I keep at her house, and a rather slow copy machine.

These rooms are emblematic. Though we never had an argument about writing, we had plenty about equipment. Well, discussions really. She thought I was foolish not to use a computer. I'd answer that computers should not be encouraged. There is a real danger, I'd say, that 30 years from now computers will be doing most of the thinking, and the majority of human beings will be disempowered.

"If you had a computer, you could be moving paragraphs around now," she'd retort, "and that's being empowered."

"But I get my paragraphs in the right order to begin with," I'd say smugly.

That's as close to a professional difference as we ever got when Anne was alive. Mostly it was pure joy being married to another writer. Why wouldn't it be? The central thing about any marriage is communication. Writers are professional communicators. If words failed us when we talked—and that was rare—one or the other of us wrote a letter. Once we both did, met halfway as we hand-delivered, sat down together and read the two letters. End of fuss.

Any two-writer menage has the resources of language available. But Anne's and my household was specially harmonious, and I think there were three reasons.

The first is very simple. We were not in competition. Anne wrote long, I wrote short. Anne wrote fiction, I wrote—not fact entirely, but some combination of pieces, casuals, reviews, essays, and even the occasional ungainly op-ed.

Of course I admire fiction, and some of Anne's books, like *The Shadow on the Dial*, took my breath away. I just can't write the stuff myself. I've tried. Once I spent a

month at a writers' colony called Yaddo. For 27 days I did draft after draft of the first chapter of what was to be a novel set in the small, hate-filled office of a trade magazine. I had plenty of plot, but I could not create one single character. They were just names.

On the 28th morning, I finally got a good idea. I took the whole 10-pound mass of drafts, and threw it out. Then I sat down to compose an essay. By that evening I had typed a semi-final version. The piece later appeared in *The New Yorker*.

Anne, on the other hand, could work out whole scenes in her head. She might stock one with five or even 10 characters, each distinct. She could get that scene onto a disk with astonishing speed.

But take something easy, like a book review, and she suffered for a week. Once, I persuaded her to take on the review of a biography of the Wright brothers—I thought she'd be a natural, given that she was the daughter of Charles Lindbergh. All she had to write was 800 words. First she read the book—twice. Then she composed eight or nine versions of the piece, moving paragraphs around like mad. The final two she read aloud to me. I liked them both, despite her obvious reluctance to say anything negative about a book which deserved a few negatives. But she never touched another review. She said writing novels was easier.

I mentioned that Anne read her two final versions to me. I also read my work aloud to her. In fact, I sometimes couldn't make myself wait until an essay was finished. I'd come running downstairs with the first two pages in my hand. Provided she wasn't writing herself, I'd try them out on her. She didn't need to speak. Just from how the two pages sounded as read to her, I knew what worked and what didn't, and could go confidently back upstairs to make changes.

Anne had more self-control. She sometimes waited until a whole book was done before she read it to me. Once, though we normally kept country hours, that meant she read aloud until 3 a.m. Then she was up at seven, moving a few paragraphs.

Need I say it? A fellow writer to whom you're married is the ideal person to read aloud to.

But the best time of all to be married to another writer is when you have to

travel. Writing itself is a lonely business (unless you have a wife out in the barn, who will be in for lunch). Going to the Miami Book Fair to sit at a long table and very occasionally autograph a book is even lonelier—unless your wife is beside you, somewhat less occasionally autographing one of hers, and whispering funny remarks in between.

Within a month or two of our marriage, Anne and I turned ourselves into a package deal. If a bookstore invited one of us, it got both. Once in a while, in Vermont or New Hampshire, I'd sell more copies than she did. In Washington she outsold me 10 to one. All except once. That was at the Cheshire Cat, her favorite children's bookstore. They naturally didn't carry my books. On our last visit there, the store was jammed—actual lines of children and mothers waiting for an inscription and perhaps a word or two with the author. There the ratio was a hundred to zero.

I didn't mind. I was sitting next to her, feeling useful, opening books to the signing page, so she could concentrate on inscribing and on talking.

About halfway through, a grandmother came up with two curly-haired grandsons. The boys turned to Anne, but the grandmother to me.

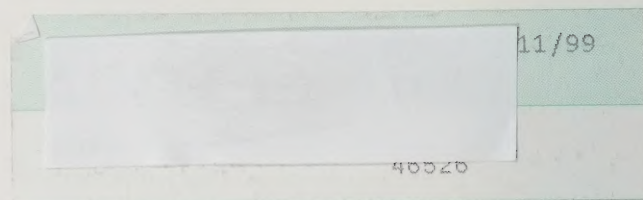
"You're Noel Perrin, aren't you?" she said. "We used to read you in *The Washington Post*. We were so pleased when you and Anne got married. You're two of our favorite authors, and it felt almost like family. I just wanted to tell you that we moved your books next to hers on the shelf."

Victorian book-collectors sometimes thought it necessary to keep male and female authors separate. I'm glad Anne and I lived when we did.

Noel Perrin is a professor at Dartmouth College and the author of numerous articles and books, among them *First Person Rural: Essays by a Sometime Farmer*. His late wife, Anne Morrow Lindbergh, owned the North Farm. He had the South. "We were building a middle farm, with a writing room at either end . . .," he explains.

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